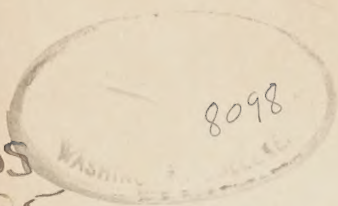




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*Photo, Gregory Bernard*

THE AUTHOR

*Frontispiece*

# SIX PRISONS AND TWO REVOLUTIONS

*Adventures in Trans-Caucasia and  
Anatolia, 1920-1921*

BY

OLIVER BALDWIN

SOMETIME LIEUT.-COLONEL IN THE ARMENIAN ARMY



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TO  
ALEXANDER GREGORIEVITCH KHANSORIAN  
MY FAITHFUL FRIEND AND COMPANION  
IN MISFORTUNE  
AND ONE OF THE FEW MEN OF HIS RACE  
WHO HAVE CROSSED ANATOLIA ALIVE

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## PREFACE

PRISON has a way of destroying one's memory and mental capacity more effectively than anything else; and if, therefore, there are readers who may dispute the accuracy of dates, I can only plead that, while the memory of the experience can never fade and recurs in dreams too frequently to be pleasant, the memory of details has faded and left a strange struggling blankness.

In the subsequent account of adventures through which readers may wade, there is but one remembrance I would wish them to retain :

A remembrance of how Armenia, by throwing in her lot with Great Britain in 1914, lost over a million of her population, had her country taken away by force, and leaves some hundred thousand Exiles wandering over the two hemispheres, suffering for the trust they placed in the word of a great nation.

*Shirburn,*

*October 22, 1923–November 22, 1924.*



## ILLUSTRATIONS

	<i>Facing page</i>
THE AUTHOR . . . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
ORDER PROCLAIMING THE NEW ARMENIAN SOVIET .	32
DR. A. I. KHATISSIAN . . . . .	48
GENERAL DRO . . . . .	72
REV. CLARENCE D. USSHER, M.D. . . . .	96
RUBEN TER MINASSIAN . . . . .	120
ALEXANDER GREGORIEVITCH KHANSORIAN . . . .	144
THE AUTHOR . . . . .	216
LIEUT.-COLONEL A. CHACHATOUNI . . . . .	240
ORDER OF RELEASE IN TURKISH AND FRENCH . .	264
MAP AT END OF VOLUME	





## CHAPTER I

MOST truly did Swinburne write "Fate is a sea without a shore," and on this vast sea was I launched as the result of a chance interview in the Savoy Palace Hotel, Alexandria, in the August of 1920.

I had journeyed to Egypt from Greece, which had become somewhat uncomfortable owing to riots, in order to study at close quarters the Egyptian National Movement. I was not destined, however, to attain the object of my visit; for in the same hotel at Alexandria there happened to be staying the first President of the newly-formed Armenian Republic, Alexander Ivanovitch Khatissian, who was visiting the Armenian settlements in the different capitals of Europe in order to obtain money for the continuation of the war against Turkey.

This war, that had been begun in 1914 when Armenia threw in her lot with Russia, had waned somewhat in 1918, only to break out afresh with the rise of Mustapha Kemal Pasha as a result of Great Britain's weakness in her dealings with Turkey. Armenia was thereupon used to break Kemal's power and finish the war for Great Britain in exchange for boots, old uniforms, Ross Rifles and ammunition—(twenty-five per cent. of which never reached the country at all, owing to the Georgian custom duties)—and the reiterated promise of recognised independence, which had been first made in 1914.

As a result of a conversation with M. Khatissian, I was invited to go to Armenia to act as infantry instructor to the Armenian Army. My intention, originally, had been to return to England through Constantinople and the Balkans; but as I saw a chance of visiting new countries and being near to the one place I longed to see above all others—Russia—I agreed to go for six months, without payment, on condition that I be given food and quarters.

A few days later M. Khatissian left for Constantinople and I followed at the end of the week.

Of the glorious voyage, in midsummer, up the Syrian coast, through the Greek islands, to Smyrna and then into the Sea of Marmora, I remember how excellent was the bathing at the ports where we stopped.

We went to Jaffa and Khaifa and landed a contingent of Jews who had come from America to people the Promised Land, at the same time taking off an equal number who had failed to find the milk and honey.

At Beyrouth we found the French in satisfied occupation, thrilled with the new flag they had just invented for the Syrians—a French tricolour with the cedar of Lebanon impaled, and busy changing the old names of the streets into “Rue de la Victoire” and “Avenue du Maréchal Foch.”

At Alexandretta, the fear of Turkey was to lead to its evacuation by the French and the betrayal of the Cilician Armenians.

At Adalia, the Italian soldiers were doing a roaring trade by selling their arms and ammunition to Mustapha Kemal's agents. As an instance of Allied unity

the Levant of 1920 was most striking and encouraging to one's sense of political humour.

Past Rhodes and Mytelene the sun made precious stones of sea-foam and grey rock, and peopled roofs with coloured shadow.

Sunken ships by the Dardanelles recalled the vain sacrifice of 1915, and Marmora's green-grey coloured water blended with the bright blue of the Bosphorus as we passed Stamboul and came alongside at Galata, Constantinople.

Much has been written of the beauty of Constantinople from the sea, and I was glad that I could now believe whole-heartedly.

Some days elapsed before I could obtain the necessary visas, but finally I boarded an Italian boat and set out for Batoum, leaving the Golden Horn bathed in sunlight and finding the Black Sea true to its name.

A strange feeling of depression now settled on me which did not leave me for many months and was to increase as time went on. I can distinctly remember feeling as if two voices within me were in combat; the one saying "Go back," the other "Go on." My belief in Destiny and my desire to see something of Bolshevism if I possibly could won the day. Ineboli, Samsun, Ordu, Kerasund, and Trebizond passed only too slowly. The morning brought Batoum in sight, misty with rain and damp. After a rapid passport examination I landed, feeling as if civilisation were in another world, as indeed I was to discover for myself.

On the quay stood many poorly-clad porters who showed no interest whatsoever in the few passengers;

neither did they offer to carry the baggage, so I shouldered my valise and moved to the customs house. I was interested to see how quickly the Russian-speaking passengers passed through the necessary formalities, since I knew that certain women among them were carrying letters to the Bolsheviks of Baku concealed in their stockings and other more intimate articles of clothing.

From the customs house I made my way to the station in order to buy a ticket for Tiflis, but things were not to be so simple. It appeared there was cholera in the town and that all intending travellers had to be inoculated and kept in Batoum two days. Nothing daunted, I made my way to the English Consul, who, although he received me as if I were his bitterest enemy, gave me a note to a doctor and provided me with an interpreter.

This doctor, for a small remuneration, inoculated me forthwith and signed a paper that assured the authorities I had stayed the necessary two days in the town.

Once more at the station and my ticket bought, I awaited the arrival of the train.

I had not long to wait, and was soon swept forward by the crowd of passengers who hurled themselves, bag and baggage, at the doors and windows, rushing madly to find a place in this train which had been built to hold only half their number.

When I managed to haul my valise in, there was not a vacant seat, so I sat down in the corridor and lit a pipe, thankful that at last I had started. Luckily I had bought a few sausage-rolls on the way to the



station and knew that I should have something to eat during my sixteen-hour journey.

About an hour later a head looked out of the compartment near to where I was ensconced and I was asked to come in, as there was just room for one more.

I was glad that in the Socialist State of Georgia I had at last found Fraternity.

The journey henceforward was full of interest, for my newly-found friend turned out to be Mr. Sharashidzie, editor of the Georgian paper *Borba* (The Struggle). I asked him many questions about the new Socialist State and he explained what benefits land nationalisation had brought and how rich the country was in both minerals and agricultural produce. Georgia, a few weeks earlier, had received a visit from Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, Mrs. Snowden and other colleagues, and was full of praise for our Labour Party and their sympathy for the child State.

A fairly uncomfortable night was passed in this compartment, which formerly had been a luxurious Russian Wagon-Lit, since the mattress, on which three of us crouched, had not been cleaned since the Revolution.

The morning showed passing scenes of unparalleled beauty : the autumnal tints of rare trees flashed past showing a brilliant patch-work screen to our eyes. Great valleys, thickly wooded; open plains, dotted with hillocks on which ruined castles rested and sighed for their glory that had passed with Liberty's advent and the bitter warfare that the country had experienced in the reign of King Irakly the Second.

In the late afternoon we made the large curve that brings Tiflis into view, and there she lay glistening with fading sunshine on wet roofs and frowned on by her protecting cliff like Cape Town by Table Mountain after rain.

Here Mr. Sharashidzie bade me farewell, and hailing a cab, I left the station for the Hôtel Noië. It was a drive over cobble-stones for some distance, and before we reached the hotel door, darkness had come upon us. There I was told that there was not a room to be had. Four more hotels were tried, and finally across the river in the poorer quarter I found a dark and dismal inn where I was provided with a room possessing only a bed and mattress, a deal table and a fixed washing-basin without a plug.

The war having accustomed one to far worse, I was grateful for what there was and thankful that the aggravating occupation of hotel-seeking was at an end.

I had a fairly good dinner in a cabaret near by, and returning to my hotel, slept well and long, dressed as I was, with a pillow of socks for my head.

The next day I called at the office of *Borba* and Mr. Sharashidzie kindly promised to send a friend of his to show me the town and act as interpreter.

During the afternoon I made inquiries as to the trains for Armenia and was told that there would be one in two days' time. I went to call on Mr. Khatissian, but found that he had left for Erivan the day before.

Tiflis, at that time, was a town of uncertainty. The Government, frightened by the Bolsheviki who

lay to their north and east, were trying to lay the foundation of a Socialist state and finding it difficult.

The history of Georgia, so little known in this country owing to our educational system preferring to dabble in decayed civilisations, is full of interest. Christianised in the first century by St. Andrew, the literature and language of this ancient people is of the highest order and possesses manuscripts of the sixth and seventh centuries. Such great poets as Sehota Roustavelli and philosophers like Petrisonelli are scarcely known in England, and the long years of warfare against the Mohammedan peoples, when Georgia and Armenia stood as the bulwarks of Christianity, have paled into insignificance before the story of Alfred and the cakes in the teachings of English Public Schools. In 1783 Russia agreed to protect Georgia on condition that Georgian foreign affairs came under Russian control, but in 1801 Tsar Alexander the First annexed the country and began to Russianise it. Four revolts for independence were unable to eject the Russians, and not till the great revolution of 1917 did Georgia taste freedom.

Then the Socialist Government took charge and might have existed to-day if they had not made such grievous mistakes.

An attempt to unite Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia was broken up by Russian intrigue, and the international ideals of the Georgian Mensheviks, leading to a lack of confidence between the Government and her national army, was the direct cause of the disaster of 1921, about which I shall write later.

The result to-day is the annexation of Georgia by

Russia, the starvation, imprisonment and massacre of her people and the exile of her leaders, while spasmodic revolts are still breaking out and resulting in ghastly reprisals.

The day before I left, Lieutenant Zourabichvili, Mr. Sharashidzie's friend, came to see me and we spent a happy evening at a fashionable cabaret and later at a performance of Maeterlinck's "Sister Beatrice." We tried to get into the Opera House, but it was the workmen's free night and the building was full.

At the cabaret I was privileged to see Mr. Abachidzé, Georgia's aged and most famous comedian, who was being fêted by his friends. Three years later this same artist was fêted in Tiflis by the Bolshevik Kommissars, who wished to show their appreciation of the drama. So carried away was one of the Russians that he asked Mr. Abachidzé what he would like best in the world.

The answer was brave and worthy of a Georgian :  
"Evacuate Georgia and leave us alone."

As the train was to start at dawn, I had but a few hours' sleep, broken at frequent intervals by a strange feeling of impending disaster. This was an increase in intensity of the feeling I had suffered on leaving Constantinople; but again I cast it aside, being determined to fulfil the destiny that seemed to be carving a way before me.

The streets were wet and dark as I hurried to the station, and the heavy rolling clouds showed grey in the first pale rays of dawn.

At the station, indescribable smells. Human forms asleep on the floor; baggage thickly piled; wet

clothes sending fumes of musty dampness into every corner of the large booking-hall. Tartars, Georgians, Armenians; poor, starving, hopeless; moving, ever moving, unsettled by the past, harassed by the present, fearful of what was to come.

Half an hour passed and the ticket office opened. A queue formed hurriedly, in which I came half-way down. Slowly we shuffled, a long, winding tale of pitiful humanity.

Suddenly I felt dizzy, the queue was getting darker and I realised that if I did not get out into the fresh air I should fall down. I left the queue and walked out into the rain and semi-darkness to lean on the balustrade that looked over the station steps. I wondered whether I were ill; then I realised that it was probably only a feeling of faintness brought on by little sleep, no breakfast and the close smelliness of the booking-stall. I had never felt like it before under far more trying conditions and wondered whether this were another warning, trying to prevent my departure. This thought annoyed me, and after a few minutes I made my way back to the booking-office. There, through the kindness of a French-speaking Armenian, I received my ticket without having to rejoin the queue.

Then this wave of humanity struggled towards the train, over railway lines, darkly plunging into darker pools of water, tripping over wooden sleepers; bags and baggage covered with mud.

At the train there was a great deal of trouble between myself and the guard over the size of my valise. This led eventually to my leaving him in fury; and pushing



myself, valise as a shield, through the besieging crowd, I took a place by force.

There were travellers on the roof, travellers on the steps, travellers on each other's knees. In this particular train was one first-class saloon reserved for the American Near East Relief and four or five third-class wagons of the Russian type, hard wooden seats converted into upper and lower bunks by lifting other wooden flaps and supporting them by iron rods as one would raise table wings.

At last the train began to move and I started to inspect my fellow travellers. Georgian peasants with pointed "papachs" who were journeying south. Armenian volunteers from America, Constantinople and Tiflis. Armenian officers from Georgia. Much wearing of the Armenian national colours, much talk, much sadness. Not a cheerful company.

The engine was wood-stoked and sent showers of sparks through the broken windows as the glorious countryside moved slowly past, untouched, untroubled by the present misfortunes of Trans-Caucasia. At little stations travellers got in and the train rolled and pitched, snorted and creaked; while in the noise of the engine I still heard "Go back, go back. Now, don't go on," till I gave up thinking and tried to talk to the peasant at my side. A gift of a fill of English tobacco gladdened his heart and he smiled, which gladdened mine.

At one small station I bought a long German sausage and some bread, intending to keep it as reserve for our three days and nights. I then bought fruit and honey, which certainly, to my mind, was better

than any I had ever tasted. I had a conversation with an Armenian from the consulate at Batoum who was on his way to join the army at Erivan. He had been educated in Switzerland and was full of information as to the course of the war, believing that the Armenians would hold Kars indefinitely.

Stopping, moving slowly, racing downhill and stopping again on an incline to take up more wood, the night overtook us at the Armenian frontier, where we were to change engines.

We moved on after dawn, and the beauty of Armenia came down to look at us. Trees and trees, multi-coloured and sun-kissed, sheltering little villas and peasants' huts. Then the trees thinned and the hills grew taller and bleaker, mountain streams appeared, and the fall of water was audible amid the snorts of our straining train. Again more honey and grapes as food and sometimes a warm soup covering odds and ends of Caucasian sheep.

The next dawn showed us we had stopped, and the noise all around meant a bigger station than usual. We detrained and walked about to get some exercise, discovering the name of the station to be Alexandropol. Here the refugees were in thousands waiting to be taken to Erivan. Refugees from western Armenia who had fled before the advancing Turk, starving and half-clothed, full of memories of the massacres they had seen and wondering where the rest of their families could be; but the rivers are deep and the snow of western Ararat covers Turkish warfare very carefully.

The great plain of Alexandropol looked wide and

bare of comfort to the poor wretches who were in search of new homes and peace. There was no note of cheerfulness at this great station; just a confused babel of voices and the hungry, hopeless look of a broken people.

Our train whistled and once more we started off. Now the scenery grew wilder, for the Alexandropol plain is the commencement of a great tongue of plateau land that stretches south as far as Erivan, guarded on the north by Mount Alla Geuze and on the south by Ararat.

A last day of shaking train journey, and midnight brought us to the end of our voyage. Many left the train, others preferred to spend the rest of the night on board, and our sleep was therefore less cramped and restless.

The station of Erivan is some distance from the town, and so, in the morning, I descended from the train and looked for some mode of conveyance, but all in vain. Soon, however, a motor-car flying the American Near East Relief flag arrived and the driver suggested that I should ask the British Military Mission to send their car, promising to deliver my message. Half an hour later the British car came in sight and I was driven to the Mission. There I explained the object of my arrival to Captain H. D. Court (who was our sole representative), and was treated very hospitably though with great reserve, the reason, I subsequently learnt from Captain Court himself, being that he and the Commissioner of the Lord Mayor of London's Relief Fund, who lived in the same house, decided that I was an Internationale spy.

That afternoon I went round to see Mr. Khatissian, who gave me a letter of introduction to the Minister for War. Ruben Ter Minassian or Ruben Pasha, as he was called, was a little revolutionary of amazing energy and resource who had long been an active member in the Dashnakzutoun (Armenian Social Revolutionary Federation) working in Turkey for the liberation of his country. After a brief interview with him it was decided to give me the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel on the Staff and to let me instruct the troops in the Erivan district.

I stayed three days at the British Mission and then moved to the Hôtel Orient, working with Lieut.-Colonel Chachatouni, the town commandant, trying to instil the elements of discipline and military knowledge into the Armenian peasant. In this work I was aided by an interpreter, Jacob Kayalian, who translated my French into Russian. Often we had to engage a third person to translate from Russian into Armenian.

This army which had been raised to resist the Kemalist attack was, it must be acknowledged, a failure, not from any lack of courage but from the force of circumstance and the short space of time possible for training.

The Armenian nation is clearly divided into two peoples: the one those who have been long under Russian rule and have therefore never had cause to fear the Turk; the other those who have lived amongst massacres and have suffered under the Turk for generations. Therefore it will be obvious that those who fought best against the Turks were those who hated them most, whilst the others—and they

were in the majority—desired peace, were not so desirous of independence and remembered the happier days when Nicolai reigned and bread was cheap, and white. The officers were for the most part officers of the old Russian Army who were used to relying on iron discipline; whilst the younger officers were absolutely inexperienced, and endeavoured either to imitate the blood-and-thunder methods of the old Russian school, or else to let everything slide.

There were but few uniforms and these had been sent by the British. There were many rifles, also sent by the British, but incidentally old Ross Rifles, guaranteed to explode at the first shot, whilst the boots sent by England were one and all too small for the long broad foot of the Armenian peasant, and were therefore useless. It is not for me to give here my impressions of the Russian military methods; it will be enough to say they were antiquated, suited only to a highly-disciplined army and therefore more than useless, as events proved.

This war which had started in mid-September, 1920, was an agreed attack suggested by Russia to worry the Allies, for no sooner had General Kazim Karabekir attacked Armenia on a four-hundred-mile front than Moscow sent a note to Erivan asking :

(1) A free passage across Armenia for Turks and Russians to enable them to join hands.

(2) A renunciation of the Treaty of Sèvres, whereby Armenia's independence was agreed to and supported by the Great Powers.

(3) To break all relations with the Allies.



Armenia, at a far smaller sacrifice than she ultimately sustained, could have agreed, but she held a blind, strange faith in Great Britain, who had made so many promises to help her and who had once beaten the Turks.

## CHAPTER II

KARS fell on the morning of October 30th, and the whole Armenian Army fell back in disorder on Alexandropol.

The true story of the treachery, incompetence and idleness which enabled this hitherto impregnable fortress to be taken may never see daylight, but the fact remains that under the cover of a thick mist the Turks passed all the outlying forts and entered the town before the G.O.C. was awake. During the spasmodic fighting that followed only two forts are remembered to have opened fire. Panic then seized the garrison and headlong flight ensued, leaving the Turks with thousands of prisoners, including the whole G.H.Q., and the semi-destroyed arsenal.

Individual tales of gallantry will always be remembered, but the appallingly negligent behaviour of General Beg Piroomov and his staff is inexcusable. That Bolshevik propaganda undermined the morale of the troops was obvious, but what made the General's A.D.C. refuse to wake his chief when the Commissioner of Police rushed to give the first news of the Turkish advance will probably never be known.

The sight of the Turks advancing with their flags flying caused the Armenians to believe the Russians

were with the enemy, since in the dim misty dawn the Turkish flag resembled that of the Soviets.

With the army fled the civilian population, but many of the latter failed to reach Alexandropol, and their massacred bodies were found in the streams weeks afterwards and photographed by several members of the American Near East Relief.

General Seelikov, the G.O.C. of the Alexandropol district, saw the impossibility of continuing the fight with such demoralised troops, and the Armenian Government thereupon begged for an armistice. This was granted and the following harsh terms perforce accepted :

(1) Turkish occupation of Alexandropol and control of the railway. Also control of an area ten miles east of the railway line.

(2) Surrender of seventy-five per cent. of all guns, rifles and ammunition, transport and mules, etc.

(3) Erivan—the capital—to remain in Armenian hands.

While these events were taking place in Armenia, it is interesting to recall the attitude adopted by Great Britain towards her ally who had fought so hard for her since 1914.

Immediately after the first demands made by the Russian Soviet, mentioned above, the Armenian Government appealed for intervention to the Great Powers who had signed the Treaty of Sèvres with her on August 10th, 1920. There was no reply.

In the autumn of 1920 the first General Assembly of the League of Nations listened to a motion from

Lord Robert Cecil (representative of South Africa), asking :

That the Council be invited immediately to take into consideration the Armenian situation and to submit to the examination of the Assembly proposals to counter the danger which actually menaces what is left of the Armenian race, and also to establish a stable and permanent state of affairs in that country.

Senator Lafontaine, representing Belgium, moved an amendment to this proposition, in which he urged the nomination of a Commission of six members who were to take measures to end the Armeno-Turkish war.

On the 22nd of November, 1920, at the ninth public session of this same League of Nations, the following members spoke in favour of Armenia : Lord Robert Cecil, MM. Spalaikovitch, Branting, Balfour, Viviani, Jonnesco, Doherty, Hanotaux, Notta and Dr. Nansen ; passing unanimously the resolution to take the necessary measures to end hostilities. The result of this was that President Wilson and the Brazilian and Spanish Governments agreed to act as mediators.

At the same time the General Assembly was discussing the admission of Armenia to the membership of the League, and the Sub-Commission charged with the question reported unanimously in favour of such admission.

The Sub-Commission's report was brought forward at a full meeting of the 5th Commission on the 1st of December 1920 by M. Viviani (France), Lord Robert Cecil, M. Ockavi (Brazil) and M. Politis (Greece), but on the intervention of the British

representative the question was put back to a later session.

So much for the League of Nations. And meanwhile still more Armenians were falling victims to Turkish massacres, while others were to suffer two months later at Bolshevik hands.

To turn our attention westwards from Caucasasia, we remember that, at the instigation of Great Britain, the most extraordinary military circus was taking place, wherein an army of Greeks was endeavouring to ease the political situation by playing hide-and-seek with Kemalists forces in the mountains of Western Anatolia.

No one yet knows the reason. No soldier would expect at that time to beat Turkey from the west, and if it were to help Armenia, the strengthening of Trans-Caucasia would have been the obvious thing to do.

However, one more piece of folly since November 1918 would only have been in keeping.

Events at this period were so rapid and diverse, that in order to understand the result, we must now turn our attention to the eastern front of Armenia which borders on Azerbaijan and was constantly being raided by Bolshevik bands of soldiery.

Azerbaijan, one of the three Trans-Caucasian States to be granted independence after the Great Peace Treaty, is a Mohammedan country inhabited by Tartars and was taken by force in April 1920 by the Imperialistic forces of Soviet Russia. In Baku (the capital), ghastly massacres resulted, and the arrest of certain British Naval Officers, who suffered, in company with the British Consul, many terrible months of



nerve-wracking misery before their Government took any measures for their release. And this while British troops were in Georgia, only some 300 kilometres away, and the Great Powers had sworn to Azerbaijan's independence. . . .

With the occupation by Russia of this poor Moslem country came an influx of Bolshevik agents to Armenia, and these men were the direct cause of Armenia's defeat by Turkey, since they promised so much and had such power.

During all this time I was busy with Colonel Chachatouni in drilling the town guard and arranging for the defence of Erivan in case the Turkish cavalry should break through and cover the odd 20 kilometres that lay between their lines and the Capital.

One day I went with one of the town Adjutants to call on the Bolshevik Mission, as I wished to learn all I could about Russia and Communism. The chief of the delegation—Le Grand, a Russian Jew of French extraction—was at work, but I had an interesting talk with his second in command, Celine, and the secretary Shieffers, who was also a Jew.

Celine, who was most charming, was a commercial traveller in Scandinavia before the war; Shieffers a young student. Both told me of the glories in Russia and denied most emphatically that there had been any massacres, except of a few bourgeoisie, "which didn't count." They told me that England was shortly to have a revolution and South Africa was to break away from the Empire in the following year.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> They were a year too soon. The Communist rebellion on the Rand took place in March 1922, but failed.

Neither of them had ever been to England, but informed me that the English workers had a twelve-hour day, worked under military control and had no boots or coats even in the cold winter. I suggested this was an exaggeration, but the reply was one I learnt to know well: "We know. Anything you may say against us is Capitalist Propaganda."

We spoke of the visits paid to Russia by members of the English Trade Unions. Again the information was new.

"They were capitalist spies dressed in peasant's clothes to deceive us; but we knew all about it."

I gathered that English Trade Union officials were thought usually to wear "bourgeois clothes," which in their minds meant a top hat and frock coat. The top hat and frock coat, incidentally, is the Russian's idea of the English national dress, worn by all except the poorest peasant.

It was just about this time that Russia was rejoicing over the defeat of Wrangel in the Crimea, and Celine's opinion of the "White Baron" was most interesting to hear. He supposed Wrangel was about to be made a "Lord" by Great Britain in the same way as Deniken had been (*sic*). Deniken, I learnt later, had been made a K.C.B. for some unknown reason.

Amongst the officers of the Armenian Army with whom I came in contact, was a young cocaine-fiend named Joseph Markossian, who was to play a sinister part in the next few months.

This entirely unscrupulous young man was a fluent linguist and had served in both the English and French Secret Services, and at this moment (December

1923) is in prison in Moscow, where he richly deserves to be.

A most plausible scoundrel, he ingratiated himself with all he met, and had escaped from every engagement twenty-four hours before defeat, thereby adding many battles to his credit and no discomfort. On November 14th I had an intimation that the British Mission was leaving on the following day and that there was room for me in the Government lorry which was to go to the Georgian frontier.

I went round to Captain Court and learnt that he expected trouble with the Bolsheviki, and that, as he did not want to be put in prison, the Mission was leaving.

I had had a strange idea that no Government would dare arrest a British representative, but Captain Court reminded me of the fate of the British Naval Attaché in Moscow, of the British Consul in Baku and of Colonel Rawlinson in Erzeroum; besides pointing out that my position in a foreign army would be interpreted as espionage and no quarter would be shown. Therefore I decided to go and promised to be ready to start in the early morning.

I went round to the Military Headquarters and told them of my intention. They agreed that the end had come and that nobody could be of any help.

I left the most mournful of headquarters and felt a coward. All that night and far into the morning I turned the matter over in my mind. Here was a country I had tried to serve, which had a blind faith in England and anyone English; the Mission was leaving, and if I went too the people and the Army

would know that Great Britain had gone back on all her promises and left Armenia to her fate. The fact that I was in no way official did not appear to matter to them. I was the only Englishman among them and stupidly felt it my duty to stand by them, since I did not believe it possible that Great Britain could desert such an Ally for good. In this I was mistaken, as in so many other things. However, in the morning I sent a letter to Court and told him I would stay. He came round to see me and called me a fool. I replied that I thought the people had some faith in me, and as long as I could I would continue to tell them that Great Britain had not deserted her Ally. The proof could only be visible if I stayed, although I had nothing to do with the British Government. Court warned me that England would have nothing to do with me if anything happened. I agreed.

The Mission left some hours later; Colonel Browne and Rev. Harcourt, the representatives of the Lord Mayor's Fund, having left earlier. Then, for the first time since I had been out in Armenia, I felt cut off from the world.

An Armenian plenipotentiary Commission under the presidency of the ex-President Khatissian, with Stabs-Capitan Georg Gregorievitch Khansorian as Secretary, then proceeded to Alexandropol to treat with General Kazim Kara Bekir Pasha, the Kemalist Commander.

Whilst this Commission was away the Bolshevik delegate Le Grand went to work on instructions from Moscow.

He pointed out to several of the more influential members of Parliament that things were in a bad way, the Turks were in Armenia and would probably advance and massacre every Christian. He insisted that Great Britain was impotent and that France was finished as a result of Wrangel's defeat. He urged that the remnant of the people could scarcely live through another winter. Then he showed his solution. If the Russian troops were invited into Armenia they would bring food and clothing with them, drive the Turk out of the country and then return home, unless the people wished them to stay. A most magnanimous offer. What could the Armenians do? They knew, if they refused, the Russians would enter by force and the country could never oppose such hordes. So they bowed to the inevitable and the next tragedy began.

During the morning of December 2nd wild rumours had begun to circulate amongst the inhabitants of Erivan. Some said the Government had left its Social Democratic (Menshevik) policy and swung to the Extreme Left, uniting with the non-parliamentarian small circle of Armenian Communists who had come into prominence in the former year, during the Georgian-Armenian war, because of their posters of "Soldiers, go not to the Front," and other Pacifist publications. This small circle was headed by a youth of eighteen and not one member had attained his majority. Others said the Bolsheviks were invading Armenia. Others that Dro (an Armenian general and peasant leader) was Dictator and that he had turned out the Parliament. I imme-



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ССВѢТЪ МИНИСТРОВЪ

Республіки Аденіні

2 декабря 1920 года

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ДЕТЪ

Ի նկատի ունենալով արտաքին հանգամանքների շարժիչ երկրում ստեղծված կացությունը, Հայաստանի Հանրապետության Կառավարությանը իր 1990 թվ. դեկտեմբերի 2-ի նիստում որոշեց՝ հրաժարել Իշխանություններից և յանձնել Զինուորական և Քաղաքացիական բովանդակ իշխանություն ու զգալիորեն Լիպսանոս ընդամենաարհեստականորեն ստեղծված նախարար Դրոբյան

Пяти ввиду сложившегося положение внутри страны благодаря вышесказанным обстоятельствам, II-го Республики Армении на заседании своем 2 декабря с. г. постановило: отстраниться от власти и сдать всю власть, военную и гражданскую, Главнокомандующему Войсками, на должность которого назначить Военного Министра Дро.

[illegible]

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Կարևորագույն է, թե՛ մեծ հիշատակներ

11.  $\{x \in \mathbb{R}^n : x_1^2 + \dots + x_n^2 = 1\}$

 $\frac{1}{2} \sum_{i=1}^n S_i \log \frac{S_i}{n} + \frac{1}{2} \sum_{i=1}^n S_i \log \frac{S_i}{n}$ 
$$\eta_+ = \frac{1}{2}(\eta_1 + \eta_2) = \frac{1}{2}(\eta_1 + \eta_2).$$

Vasilius Vasilevski i Ljuba Gligorov

ආප්තියක් සහතික කරයි. එමෙන්ම සහතික

С. Враняну

А. Овзипянц.

А. Овзпянт,

M. J. Griffin, J. S. Bruneau

$$Y = \sum_{i=1}^n X_i(t) \mathbf{1}_{[t_i, t_{i+1})}$$

А. Тертемиш

А. Казьян.

Намкандарин Туманян.

## ORDER PROCLAIMING THE NEW ARMENIAN SOVIET

“ A decision has been made for the benefit of the country owing to external conditions, and therefore the Armenian Republic at their sitting of the 2nd December of this year (1920) have decided to surrender the reins of Government and all power, military and civil, also the control of the Army to one office (centre of direction) which has been given to the War Minister Dro.”

[To face p. 32.]



diately made my way to the Georgian Consulate and made inquiries, knowing that if I asked the Armenian Ministers I should be met with a long story completely off the point and more bewildering as time went on. The Georgian Military Attaché had heard rumours, advised me to save myself whilst yet I could, viséed my passport and bade me farewell. I was not satisfied by rumours alone and therefore proceeded to the Bolshevik Mission and asked to see the Secretary, Schieffers. "And why should the Gospodine Polkovnik wish to leave?" he asked. I replied that as Armenia had, I supposed, ceased to be a Republic and become a Soviet, I did not see that I should be needed any more. He answered that as an Englishman and a Socialist I ought to be interested in watching the Sovietising of a country and the bringing of liberty to Armenia; that anyhow the Bolshevik Eleventh Army was advancing on Armenia and he could not give me permission to pass through them. He added that any officer who wished to join the Red Army could do so, and all others could leave the country in a few weeks' time. Celine then entered the room and assured me that after I had watched Bolshevism at work I would be sure to worship it. I returned to the centre of the town and my eyes were greeted by a small placard stating that owing to the present situation the Government had resigned, and placed everything in the hands of Comrade Dro and a Soviet had been proclaimed. People were amazed, incredulous, but for the most part apathetic. Anyhow, they thought, it would be better to have the Russians back and to lose their independence than to be

massacred by the Turks. Only those who had been in Deniken's army or had lived under Bolshevism were frightened, and they accordingly made preparations to escape to Georgia or Persia at once. I went straight round to the Town Commandant's orderly-room and found Colonel Chachatouni in despair, surrounded by his officers, some of whom had been white Russians, and others who had escaped from Russia to avoid being murdered. I told Chachatouni what I thought of Dro's betrayal of the Armenian people, and he told me what he thought of England's effort in that direction. He prophesied we should both be hanged outside his room and altogether was most pessimistic.

Many of my friends urged me to leave and a hundred ways were suggested, maps consulted and preparations made.

However, the fear that my fate would be worse if I attempted to escape decided me once more to remain and see for myself the workings of Bolshevism.

I well remember walking up and down a dirty, bare little living-room with Stabs-Capitan Georg Khansorian, who had just returned from the treaty-making at Alexandropol, discussing the possibilities of escape from every point.

We had learnt that the Bolsheviki were advancing from Dilijan in two directions—west and south—thereby cutting Armenia off from Georgia in the north and north-east.

The Turks lay south-west and north-west; the Bolsheviki of Azerbaijan east. The only hope lay south-east towards Persia over the high snow-clad ranges of Karabagh and Zanguezur.

But again fear of capture and interest in future events forbade me to decide on such a long, unknown journey.

M. Khatissian and his secretary, Georg Khansorian, had only returned to Erivan on the understanding that they would be allowed to leave for Georgia almost immediately, but it was Georg Khansorian's desire to see his younger brother safe that made him suggest my departure, taking the brother Alexander with me as an orderly.

Alexander Gregorievitch had served as a trooper in the Armenian cavalry and was destined to accompany me later on my flight from Erivan and to suffer many months' imprisonment in Turkey for his devotion and gallantry, but as he was Russian bred and could not talk Armenian, he considered it wiser to await events.

General Dro, or Tovaresh (Comrade) Dro as he had become, then issued, at the instigation of Le Grand, an order turning the whole Armenian Army into the Armenian Socialist Federative Sovietic Force, and forbidding the carrying of the national flag, the playing of national music, the wearing of national cockades, epaulets, decorations and badges of rank.

The result was a blaze of red from every window and a large output of red rosettes which everyone wore to save their lives. Apprehension was in the air. Little crowds of people gathered in the streets and wondered what would happen. The whole thing had been such a surprise. . . .

A squadron of Armenian cavalry arrived on the afternoon of the 4th, in front of the Town Commandant's office, bearing the national flag aloft. The



officer in charge, taking the flag, entered the house, to emerge shortly with a blood-red one which he handed to the standard-bearer; the squadron then moved off, but they were joking. Certainly had one's sense of humour not been overshadowed by fear, there were many little incidents like this which were full of sad amusement.

That same afternoon I went to the house of an American missionary, Dr. Ussher, a fluent Armenian scholar and one who had passed some twenty-five years among the Armenian people, having also been present at the siege of Van when the Armenian inhabitants made such a gallant defence against the Turks in 1915.

I had heard that two representatives of the American Near East Relief were leaving immediately in a motor-car, and a vague impulse urged me to ask if there was any chance of transport for me. Dr. Ussher told me where I might find Captain Dangerfield, the head of the Relief station, but on arriving at his office I learnt he had already left. Then I knew the last thread had snapped and that my stay in Erivan would be prolonged.

By the 5th of December, Dr. Ussher and Peers, an Italian merchant named Parmijani, the Persian Consul and I were the only strangers in Armenia.

This deserted representative of the American Near East Relief activities, Charles Peers, had married an Armenian in Tiflis and had a baby boy a few months old. I shall later try to describe some of his courageous actions during the Bolshevik terror and also point out how he and Dr. Ussher kept the United States'

honour high in the midst of distress, panic and starvation.

The Armenian Government fled on the morning of the 5th; Ruben Ter Minassian south and the remainder northwards. [I should mention here that in the middle of all this the Government received a bill from the British Foreign Office requesting the payment of some odd pounds, shillings and pence for the transport of one Armenian refugee on a British warship from Cyprus to Constantinople.]

Colonel Chachatouni also left with a party of field officers, guided by an Armenian second lieutenant who afterwards turned out to be a Bolshevik spy.

When this party neared Karaklis, the spy urged the party to enter the town, but Chachatouni and two others refused and struck north-west across country, eventually reaching safety. The remainder of the party were led straight into the arms of the Russians, who had arrived at Karaklis from Dilijan, and were immediately put in prison for attempting to escape from the "Saviours of the Proletariat."

On the evening of the 4th, I was again entreated to hide in a village in the mountains where one or two officers had already gone and were awaiting me, but, as I had decided otherwise, I refused.

That evening the crowds were more apprehensive and listened in awe to the tales people told of the early days of Bolshevism which they had heard from wiser friends who had left the city during the past three days.

In the darkness a man would tear off his red rosette with an oath and replace it with the national colours;

and a hushed circle on the outskirts of the town would hum "Mir Hairenik," the National Hymn.

The Tartar population of Erivan shuffled orientally about their quarter; changes of Government meant nothing to them; peace and quiet is the sensible joy of the Moslem. . . .

I walked up to the top of the hill overlooking Erivan that evening and watched the sun setting west of Ararat, and wondered what would happen and when the increasing nightmare of uncertainty would end.

It began to snow slightly and the peaceful plain of Erivan looked so unperturbed, with its darkening colouring through the white haze.

On the top of this same hill only a month before I had watched a battalion do an imaginary night attack and had criticised the points in an atmosphere of calm and determination. Now Armenia's short independence had faded and the coming dawn would bring—anything.

At this time, however, although I was somewhat nervous of the future, I still believed that Communism was not nearly as bad as it was painted and that I should witness deeds of liberty, equality and fraternity that I could treasure as ideals for evermore.

I thought up there, on the whitening hill, of my country's betrayal of Armenia after her innumerable promises, and of how Mustapha Kemal with half a million men had changed defeat into victory and robbed Great Britain of so many, many lives.

Had I been able to foresee the Treaty of Lausanne, the blackest, most pitiable and wicked treaty that England ever signed, I might have been braver and

more outspoken in my future dealings with the Bolsheviki, and thereby saved myself the humiliation of being proved wrong when I constantly told the Armenian people that Great Britain could never break so solemn a series of promises as those made between 1915 and 1920—those promises that were even being made up till 1922. But then it was not my business to say anything, I was neither an official nor a politician.

### CHAPTER III

DECEMBER the 5th dawned with slight snow on the ground and apprehension in the streets. To-day was to see the town occupied by Russian troops and the completion of this hurried bloodless revolution.

It may seem strange that no one objected, and that military opposition was not forthcoming on behalf of the Armenian people, but it must be remembered we were all taken unawares, and Russia, after all, had brought many blessings in the past. The idea was also prevalent that the Bolsheviki had only come to turn the Turks out of Armenia and then return home.

The Russian Legation was in a state of great excitement; cars, brightly painted red, drove up to the door and discharged or took up the Kommissar of this and the Kommissar of that, heavily cloaked and decorated with the Communist star of silver and red enamel and wearing the black leather pointed and peaked cap with the red cloth star on the front. The outside of the house was guarded by two Letts armed to the teeth, who a week before had never thought of showing a weapon; but then, they were used to the game of revolution and knew what crowds might suddenly do.

Little knots of people still hung about the street



corners. Shopkeepers hastily made flags of remnants of red cloth and hung them outside their doors; while under the tiled or mud floors of hundreds of houses were buried rifles, ammunition, money and jewels.

I spent part of the morning with my interpreter continuing the report I was writing for the reorganisation of the army, which I did partly for something to do and partly in case the Bolshevik regime should fulfil its promise and depart after freeing the country of Kemalist troops. Jacob Kayalian, who had witnessed the 1917 revolution when he was in Rustov, was very nervous for my safety at this stage of the proceedings and filled me with tales of what crowds do to officers on revolution mornings. However, most of the people knew me by sight and were far too ignorant of their duty as budding Communists to attack anyone for no reason except that he held a commission.

Lunch in the cold hall of the bleak Hôtel Orient was quieter than usual and the hall filled up with members of the Armenian Communist Party, who all enjoyed themselves hugely, commandeering food and signing pieces of paper in payment, which the wretched proprietor took and wondered at.

The average age of the Executive of this party was eighteen, and I personally knew one of sixteen years old and two of eighteen.

These were all armed with butted Mausers and were very fond of placing them on the tables during meal-times, which made them look very dreadful and wicked, which was exactly what they wanted.

One young man came and sat by me and told me that at last liberty was coming to Armenia, and that everyone who was not a Communist would be put in prison or shot.

I asked whether that would include me, and was informed that I would probably be complimented by being one of the first. He was kind enough to add that if I were a *Sinn Feiner* I would probably be fêted; but I could not be that, since all *Sinn Feiners* were dark-skinned and wore black hats.

Fixed and childlike ideas I found to be prevalent amongst the aristocracy of Bolshevism; very similar indeed to English stump-orators who consider a Frenchman to be English with a black moustache, and a Russian to be exactly like an Englishman in ways and customs, only with a fair beard as an addition.

At about 2.30 the Russian cavalry entered the town. Not a murmur from the crowd. Horses treading softly in the snow. Soldiers with fingers on their rifle triggers, all eyes; expecting opposition. But not a shot was fired, and in perfect order and silence they moved and halted outside the Parliament building, where a moderate-sized crowd had collected.

The balcony of this building was covered with red bunting. Three pictures hung from it, Marx in front, Lenin to the right, Bronstein to the left. A crowd of youths, wearing their "gymnaze" coats and caps covered with red rosettes, stood thereon, whilst on two adjoining balconies was a small assembly of people who claimed to be able to sing; also

members of the Armenian Communist Party and Russian Red officers.

Below stood the band of the garrison battalion, in the best of good humour, laughing at each other's rosettes. Then the speeches began. Avis (aged twenty-two), the new Soviet Minister for War, said he was glad liberty had at last come to his country, that at last the bourgeoisie (of which incidentally he was one) had been overthrown, that now peace and plenty would come to the proletariat; therefore: "Long live the Third Internationale." Here the band struck up "The Internationale," terribly out of tune, the officers saluted and the occupants of the right-hand balcony began to sing, conducted from the centre balcony by a frantic-looking, pale-faced youth with long hair. Avis continued. He was here to congratulate the Armenian people on their good sense. Those soldiers below were the saviours of mankind. They were all brothers and all belonged to the Third Internationale.

Off started the music again, and the choir breathed hard in catching them up. Comrade someone else, the soldiers' friend from Baku, would now speak. Cheers from the balconies, silence from the crowd, and a few wan smiles. "Quelle blague!" murmured an Armenian in my ear. I did not think so; I was getting enthusiastic. I like brotherhood.

"Long live Soviet Armenia!" cried the new speaker. "Long live Soviet Azerbaijan. Long live Soviet Russia. Georgia will soon be a Soviet too. Turkey will follow. Our Red Armies will sweep over Europe, turn everything upside down;

kill the Mensheviki (Social Democrats) and the bourgeoisie. Long live the 'Third Internationale!'" Off went the choir. The band had forgotten itself in the enthusiasm of the moment, but started off gamely about six bars behind, much to the annoyance of the pale-faced conductor. This farce—I see it was now—continued for about an hour, and the proceedings closed. The soldiers went off to find sleeping accommodation wherever they liked, and the crowd dispersed. "Shto Boodyet, what is going to happen?" everybody asked everybody else. Would there be bloodshed? Would the Turks be driven away, and would their independence be restored to them?

That same night a notice was posted, saying :—

(1) Armenia was now the Armenian Sovietic Federative Socialistic Republic.

(2) Armenian was to be the national language.

(3) Celine (the Russian Bolshevik Chargé d'Affaires in Erivan) was to displace Dro and become Dictator.

And thus was the independence of Armenia destroyed. The national flag and anthem were forbidden. The Ministry of the new Republic, although composed of some Armenians, held Russians and a Turk in office. Russian was the language in practice, orders came from Moscow, and then the fun began.

Still there was no great terror in the town, for the Communists had promised faithfully to arrest no one and allow those that wished to leave the country.

Social Democrats, however, raised their eyebrows

when they learnt that Communists were urging the soldiers to shoot their officers. It certainly said a great deal for the army that in no case that I am aware of did this happen, and the amazement of the Communists was very apparent, since in both Russia and Siberia there had been no difficulty in having the officers shot, as anyone who knew the Russian army will understand.

In the artillery, a Russian was even kicked for suggesting such a thing, but the officer commanding was to suffer in return, since he was among the first to be arrested.

In spite of promises, wholesale arrests were carried out on the sixth, the prisons having been opened on the day before and all political prisoners, deserters, thieves and murderers released to make room.

All friends of the late Government, all members of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnak-zutoun) who were party leaders, many doctors, lawyers and journalists, officers and professors. In short all who had professed, were likely to profess or were supposed to have professed dislike of Bolshevism were arrested.

These included several men who had suffered many years of Siberian prisons for Socialism and who had championed the cause of the people before any of the Armenian Communist Party or young Russian Kommissars had been born.

The old game was being played. The paths of liberty, blood-strewn, corpse-strewn, trampled out, ditched, hedged and cut out by the Social Democrats of the last fifty years, were to be used and destroyed by men belonging to an upstart Jew-ridden party that called itself Communist. All who had worked



for the liberty of peoples were tortured, shot or imprisoned, and those that stepped from the nursery of degeneracy into the drawing-room of impracticable political ideas ruled and owned no God but Lenin, sacrificing life, hope and faith to the realisation of a German Jew's theory. Not that Marx is wholly responsible, for much that he wrote is true, but he it was who played the tune and degenerate savagery supplied the rest.

Russia, that vast expanse of kindest life-giving earth, turned into a prairie of wilderness peopled with sorrow and tragedy, over which ghosts walked in their hundreds of thousands, awaiting the day when they should testify to their God, and the Heavenly decision be accorded those betrayers of humanity whose ghastly end lurks in the grey places of the future.

So it was also to be done to Armenia, because Armenia had been under Russian rule before, and the Imperialism denounced in others was permissible to the denouncers.

The duties of the soldiery in revolution were next shown to the wondering people. Little parties of four or five soldiers, armed to the teeth, proceeded to every house, rich or poor, and forcibly took away all rice, wheat and oats, tinned and condensed milk. Sheep and cattle were also confiscated from the peasants. Any other little things, such as a carpet, jewellery, an overcoat, were of course taken as well.

To those who mildly expostulated the answer was that all this would be sent to Russia and, in exchange, would come white bread, clothes, fresh milk and all

that was necessary. . . . And we believed them because we did not know.

And so the houses were entered and ox-carts took the spoil away. A great deal of the wheat was certainly sent to Russia, but nothing came back, for the very natural reason that Communism can never produce even enough food for Russia herself.

An instance of bureaucratic deceit took place some weeks later when, after a protest by the Armenian Socialists as to the length of time taken by Russia in sending the white bread, three large sacks of flour arrived by train. Unfortunately the name of the miller was on the inside of the sacks, and they were proved to have been requisitioned by the Government in south-eastern Armenia and sent to Erivan in order to keep the people quiet.

I must say that one or two of the Military Kommissars seemed to believe in their doctrine and they certainly did help to extend a feeling of fraternity. I was standing in the hotel corridor when one of these full-bearded Russians came in. Without any conventional bowing and scraping, he gripped my hand and saluted me as a comrade and hoped I was well. I liked it. It was a good atmosphere. I also made the acquaintance of another Soviet Kommissar. His idea of England was nearly as funny as English Communists' idea of Russia. He believed that all workers worked under the whip, were not paid and wore rags. He spoke a good deal about "lords," who in his idea made up the whole of the bourgeoisie. He told me one of his friends once went to London, and seeing a restaurant, entered and ordered his meal.

All of a sudden a man approached and said, "Are you a lord?" He replied he was not, and desired to know why such a question was asked. The gentleman replied that he was in a lords' club, and as he had entered without being a member he would have to fight a duel. The Kommissar's friend immediately fled. When I laughed at what I was hearing about England he assured me that it was all true and that it was I who knew nothing, for he had read it in the Communist journals and they were infallible. He despised universal suffrage, for he said that in England on the eve of the Parliamentary poll each lord gave a great dinner to the electors and that therefore they naturally voted for him. The man who told me these stories was a Kommissar of Justice.

I had spoken with Celine at length on Communism and Socialism. I agreed that the ideal was fine; the spirit of comradeship was excellent, but that the economic system, the nationalisation of women and the Chezvichyka were the bad points. He told me Communism should be judged by its results. I agreed that it was the best way.

In talking to the Russian private soldiers, young boys for the most part, all of them peasants, I was interested. When they had made sure that no Bolshevik was listening to them they told me how they were made to work sixteen hours a day at the oilfields in Baku in battalions, how they were whipped and how they had nothing to eat, how they had been made to commit atrocities on counter-revolutionists at the point of the revolver, and how they longed for Nicolai and white bread.



DR. A. I. KHATISSIAN  
President of the Armenian Republic, formerly Mayor of Tiflis.

[To face p. 48.]



On the 8th of December I heard that they were going to arrest me. Amongst many reasons given was that I had spoken against the arresting of the officers. One of the real reasons was that in conversation with the Kommissar of Justice, who had asked my frank opinion of the Communist regime, I replied that I was deeply interested, but saw no reason why the milk sent to the starving Armenians by the American Relief Commission should have been collected and sent off to Russia as it had been. My friend the Kommissar was obviously annoyed and informed me that I was a capitalist—a stock phrase of theirs. At that moment there was no possible way of escaping, for the town was surrounded by Red cavalry. I could do nothing but wait.

I have written in the preceding chapter of Joseph Markossian and I must now tell of the part he played in securing my arrest. I did not suspect him of being other than faithful till after my release, when the story of his escapades was related to me by several officers and civilians. He was a coward by nature and consequently did his utmost to be made an agent of the "Tcheka." This he soon became, and proceeded to inform his chief that I had hundreds of Turkish pounds which I used on behalf of Great Britain. This information on top of my conversation with the Kommissar of Justice was enough and more for an arrest. On the evening of the eighth I entrusted what little money I had to Jak Vassilitch Arakelian, Chachatouni's former adjutant, and gave my silver Caucasian sword to the care of Madame Korotkova, the mother of Shura Khansorian, to whom this book



is dedicated. Again that night I was urged to fly to the hills, but I had not the courage to face possible capture and the consequences that would follow, so I refused. It was still snowing slightly that night, my last night of peace for many days, and I thought how completely snow can cover all traces of a stranger in a foreign land.

In the morning Arakelian came to the hotel and told me Amatouni, the second in command of the "Tcheka," wished to see me. We walked round to his office, and there, without explaining them, he informed us that there were several serious charges against me and I was therefore to be imprisoned. An orderly from the Town Commandant's office carried my scanty belongings, and Arakelian and I walked off to the prison, into which I entered at half-past ten in the morning of December the 9th. Certainly a graceful method of being imprisoned.

The prison I found myself in was only temporarily used as such, and though it had barred windows, had been a private house. The bare-walled room into which I walked held four wooden beds, a table, three stools and a candle in a bottle. At the table, playing backgammon, sat two elderly men. I saluted them in Russian, to which one replied in German, in which language we spoke for the rest of the time. This man, Ischranian by name, was a professor of statistics and had been educated at a German university. Eight years he had spent in prison for Socialism before the Revolution, and now, because in the Armenian Parliament he had spoken against the Bolsheviki, he was again incarcerated. The

other man, an ex-military doctor of the Russian army named Ter Mikalian, was in prison for being a friend of an ex-Minister of the Armenian Republic. They were both cheerful and interesting.

We spoke of "Cabbages and Kings," of Armenia and her betrayal, of Social Democracy and its oppressors the Communists, of Jew-controlled Russia, of Zionism and of destiny, and to every subject Ischranian added a memorised table of statistics. His memory for figures was formidable.

For lunch we all had two loaves of black bread, hard, round and interesting. For each seven pieces of chaff one pebble—and therefore more statistics from my companion. The other two had food sent them by their wives and friends, and their kindness in letting me share in the eating saved me from learning what starvation was earlier than I did.

In a diary that I wrote during my first imprisonment, which I left in the care of the American missionary Dr. Ussher, who sent it to me a year later, I noted :

This room is thirteen paces by seven and has three windows of six panes each, but the bars behind make the panes appear to be sixteen. It is funny how one notices little things in one's first prison. The soldiers<sup>1</sup> are considerate, which is one thing. I am resigned, and am in the same state of mind as Mr. Micawber.

I noted also that Chalgadzian visited me, bringing a bottle of ink I had left behind. He told me that

<sup>1</sup> These soldiers were Armenian, the Red infantry regiments from Russia not having arrived yet.

Joseph Markossian had been "told off" to effect my arrest but was forestalled.

It was very cold that night, and I was awakened at 2 a.m. by Joseph, who told me I should probably be sent to Baku, which was not comforting, for if there is any journey that is capable of killing, it is Erivan to Baku, where the wind rushes down the Dilijan road like an army of scythes.

The second day of my imprisonment dawned cold and white. I washed outside and nearly froze. In the afternoon Chalgadzian came in with an order for us to be moved to the military prison, whither we accordingly went.

This is the real thing (says my diary). Four dirty stone walls, one tiny barred window and a door with a slot in it. We were searched and I had to hand over 150,000 roubles, all letters and papers. The other two had to give up their watches—I hid mine. The doors are always bolted and locked but the warders were kind and let food be brought in for the others. Ischranian and Ter Mikalian are very good and let me have a full share of their food. Without them I should be very hungry. It is cold in here; the room being nine paces by five and very high.

The sanitary arrangements in this prison were about as foul as can be imagined; but they had their humours. . . .

Great interest among the other prisoners at an Englishman being here, and questions as to why he stayed and did not fly. Ah, why? They've just brought in a small stove and some wood which I chopped up in fine style. It is warmer now.

11/12/20. Great excitement on the part of the guard because we turned off our light last night. It appears it should stay on all night so that they can see what prisoners are up to. This morning it was very cold. . . . Washed with the other prisoners, who were interested in my sponge. In the courtyard met sad but interested faces, and murmurs of "Ingleezie Gundapet" and shaking of heads. . . . Tried to introduce a little common sense in the arrangement of seating accommodation round the stove; but no luck. . . . No visitors so far—twelve o'clock. I wonder if war<sup>1</sup> is declared yet. I can stand this all right, I think, but I don't want to go to Baku or Moscow. I wish I had something to read, but there it is. It is a gloomy day, but one nearer freedom. I wish Georgia would declare for a Soviet and end all this stupidity. It is the only way out for her. I want a chance of explaining my position. Some more civilian prisoners come in—no, they're not—what are they? Some visitors plus a Red officer. We were all summoned to the office but I think only to be looked at. The officer knew nothing of me, though he forbade Madame Zouronova to speak to me. What a dread they have of a foreign language—French it was. She was just able to ask if I had enough to eat. She looked sad,<sup>2</sup> poor woman. I believe Ischranian is to be freed soon.

The stove is going well and is tended by a young prisoner who has been here twenty-one months and has two more to go. His crime was selling a Government revolver to a Tartar. This afternoon

<sup>1</sup> War between Georgia and the Soviet who were advancing from Baku.

<sup>2</sup> Madame Zouronova had a husband in the Armenian Army. Her father, a Russian General, and her elder brother had been murdered by the Bolsheviks, and her younger brother fell in the Armeno-Georgian war of 1920. Her mother she knew nothing of, but imagined her to be somewhere in Russia.

an order came to free the Army deserters. I suppose to make room for the late Ministry, who, I hear, have all been handed over to the Bolsheviks by the peasants who interrupted their flight and robbed them of all. I fear for their fate. The order, I now hear, is not for the deserters but for "un particulier." I have been walking round and round the room. . . . There is a prisoner here who has a hundred and one years to do, of which he has done two.

12/12/20. Cold again. . . . Feeling very fit but, like everyone else, have a slight cold. The others are reading. If only I had a "William." . . . Arakelian came bringing "gata," apples, pears, white bread and cheese for me which he had bought out of his own money. It was very good of him and touched me not a little. He says I shall probably be freed in a few days; but he is only being optimistic. I asked him to tell Schieffers that I claim the protection of the Internationale, and want to know why I am here. This afternoon Ischranian's friends came and told him he would be out to-morrow. One of them appears to be sister to a leading Armenian Bolshevik, and she is going to speak to her brother about me. The doctor will continue to whistle his one and only tune—the waltz in the market-place from Gounod's "Faust." We spent the morning pasting strips of the *Komoonist* on the window-frame to keep the cold out. To-day the doctor suggested the identical positions round the stove that I had previously remarked on; this time I refused. If I do get out of this, how on earth am I to get into Georgia? No news about the Soviet ultimatum to Georgia yet, but I expect she will accept the conditions. It is now nearly five. . . .

13/12/20. Monday. Quite warm this morning owing to fire of last night. Slept in pyjamas in my sleeping-bag for the first time for ages and conse-



quently had a grand bug-hunt before dressing. I hope Arakelian comes with some news from Schieffers to-day.

14/12/20. Had a bad stomach-ache last night, so dosed myself with ginger and was cured. Cold again, nothing happened and nobody came.

15/12/20. A peculiar day. Joseph suddenly arrived. He is to be in prison for thirty days. What he has done is uncertain, probably stolen something. He speaks of Baku and says Chalgadzian has informed the Chezvichyka that I have 150 Turkish pounds and 65 English; that I was a great friend of Captain Court and know Colonel Rawlinson, the prisoner in Erzeroum. Wonderful.

(Months after I discovered that it was Joseph himself who had told this lie to the Tcheka, but I was not then cognisant of the extraordinary mental perversions of a cocaine fiend, and still thought Joseph orientally honest.)

Second event, the doctor is free and has promised to see Dro about me. Saw a spider to-day, it filled me with hope. "L'araignée du soir—espoir." Joseph is quite mad about cocaine, so I foresee an odd end to his amazing career. Chalgadzian's behaviour, if it be true, is amazing. I now see the type of Armenian that Court so detests. Have now arranged the beds as I wished.

16/12/20. Very warm last night. This morning tried my hand at making cocoa which Ischranian had had sent him, but with moderate success and tepid water out of a condensed milk tin.

The Kommissar of something or other came to see Ischranian, and he is to be free to-morrow. The Kommissar seemed uncertain as to my fate and spoke of Baku and exchanging of prisoners. The doctor



came but has not seen Dro yet. . . . Wrote out a statement in French for Ischranian to give the Kommissar when he is free. What hopes?

17/12/20. At 18.00 hours to-day Ischranian was freed and now I am alone except for Joseph's repeated visits. The Bundapet (Governor) has to read my statement beforehand, so Ischranian won't be able to give it in before late to-morrow. One day more lost. Oh, those Armenians and Russians, with their "Zavtra, zavtra, zavtra" (to-morrow)! In a fine state of gloom because of Ischranian's departure, and thoughts of Baku and robbery and violence on the part of the other prisoners towards me make me not of the cheeriest. If only I had a "William." This is the end of the eighth day. . . . That blasted doctor has not turned up to-day; I thought he wouldn't. The blasted fire has gone out and I shall freeze to death to-night—and a good job too. The wood is damp and so are my spirits.

18/12/20. Ischranian came to take away his mattress and took with him my statement, which he promised to take to the Kommissar to-day. Half my loaf was stolen this morning by some prisoner or other. . . . Was just tucked in and ready to doze when four prisoners were brought into my cell for playing cards. I was furious at being disturbed and told the warder he had no right to bring them into a political prisoner's room. No luck; so I got up and dressed in a fury, gave Joseph my flea-bag, and my bed was put alongside the other, and another brought in, and now, 12.15 a.m., all are asleep except I, who am going to spend the night writing. I shall see the Bundapet about that guardian to-morrow. They brought in some wood and got the fire going, which is something, so it will be warm at least.

19/12/20. I wonder what to-day will bring? It brought nothing at all, not even Ischranian. The

four are to stay. One is like a typical stage villain and the others are ordinary. They spit and blow their noses all over the room; and they call themselves bourgeoisie. One, it appears, was inspector of prisons, and the stage villain with the beery eyes and whisky voice is cashier in the bank. In the evening another of their friends was brought in who had escaped the previous night. They all five slept here, plus Joseph, who was on the floor. The Chezvichyka is to come to-morrow.

20/12/20. Joseph was freed at 10.30 hours to-day and is going to see Bobrishev. I hear Krassin is in London and Allied ships are to trade in the east of the Black Sea, so what is the excuse for keeping me here? Joseph, it appears, went to Iablokov<sup>1</sup> whilst I was in prison, said I wanted my sword, received it and sold it. . . . And all the while pretends he would do anything for me. Oh, these Armenians—no wonder Court hates them! This was told me by Kayalian and Shura, who came to see me, bringing “pachlova” and “gata.” They tell me Chachatouni is safe, but some of his friends who kept to the road were caught. Dangerfield, it appears, having had his room taken, took to flight before further disasters could happen. Where he is, is not known, but if he’s got any sense he’ll make for Erzeroum and thence to Kharpoot, where the Near East are well respected. It also appears that my paper had the required effect and I may be freed in the next few days; but I hang no string of hope on that tree; one never knows—one may be shot to-morrow. If I do get out, how to get away from this damned country? A young Bolshevik soldier arrived a prisoner yesterday; he speaks English and was fourteen months at Bde. Hqrs. 99th, then with Deniken and then captured, subsequently becoming a Red. His crime was

<sup>1</sup> *E.g.*, Khansorian.

refusing to groom a Bolshevik officer's horse and resisting escort. Shall I spend Xmas here?

21/12/20. Joseph sent word last night that all was well. He came himself this morning and promises freedom to-morrow. Questioned him about my sword: he says it is with Schieffers; told a lot of lies but it is impossible to be angry with the man. The stage villain and one of the others freed this evening. Spoke a good deal with the young soldier; he swears he would do anything for me and takes my imprisonment more to heart than his own. He even offered me money—his devotion was embarrassing. This evening, not having any wood, my companions took it into their heads to make away with one of the beds, which they did with great skill and secrecy. I sat on my bed and watched, having no desire to have my stay prolonged should they be discovered. . . . Schieffers is due to come and see me to-morrow: I hope to apologise. . . . There is a prison mouse here, in fact two of them.

22/12/20. 11.30 and rumours that my paper is in the Commandant's office and that to-day I go. I don't trust anyone in this country, so probably it's a false hope. Where shall I sleep to-night if I am free? The hotel is requisitioned and all restaurants closed.

23/12/20. If I don't get out to-day I shall never get out and I'm damned if I care; one can get accustomed. We are all covered with bugs and this morning my companion picked a whopper off my vest—we put him on the stove. This afternoon another prisoner—called "Effendi," a Turkish Armenian, was freed. We are now three. It's like the ten little nigger boys. The doctor, Ischranian, Shura (the boy), Joseph, Amatuni, Effendi, the fair-haired one, the Prison Inspector, the man from Karabagh and myself—ten, in fact. Who will be the one alone? No luck

to-day. I wonder if there is any hitch or if it's only a case of "zavtra." To-morrow Xmas Eve.

24/12/20. I'm no good at making tea; I can't wait till the thing boils so I drink it half done. Not being a gourmet it seems all right to me. Eaten alive last night, hardly slept. One mouse was caught in the man from Karabagh's "sapok" and was drowned in the latrine bucket. The other, for vengeance, spent the night running over my bed. No fire this morning. This afternoon early enter Joseph and Chalgadzian. It appears that Arakelian, hearing from Kayalian what Joseph had said to me about Chalgadzian, told the said gentleman. Chalgadzian thereupon threatened to shoot Joseph, which he can do at sight, being of the Chezvichyka; made out an order for his arrest and marched him before me. Was it true? Joseph lied like a dentist and I had to half support him; told Arthur I hadn't believed it and prayed him not to imprison Joseph. Hot words between the two and threats of a most sinister kind and I trying to pacify. Our ages: Arthur 22, Joseph 20 and I 21. What power youth has in the Bolshevik regime! Joseph swears my papers are all but ready and Arthur swore to hurry it up. Nothing to-day. I spend Xmas here—that's settled. This Xmas I feel like Scrooge—"Merry Xmas, ugh! who wants a merry Xmas?"

25/12/20. Xmas Day. Saturday. Rajdestvo. Time was up for the last two this morning, so they went; taking a note to Ischranian for me asking for inquiry about my liberty. No fire this morning—no wood, but the heat has kept in the room to a certain extent. Sent out for a Xmas dinner and was brought sausage and Tartar bread. Made myself a Xmas present of some tobacco and a box of matches. Even at Batum they are having turkeys, chickens, beer and whisky, I suppose. Oh, what a Xmas I

hope to have in 1921! Running short of paper—I must send for some. Pinched some wood, hacked it up and got the fire going at last. Alh'mdullah. A wonderful heat—well done, me! Just “made me a cup o’ tea, lit me a pipe,” and feel more like good old Wilkins than ever.

26/12/20. Boxing Day. I don’t seem to be able to sleep these nights. Just been called out to see someone. Who do you think it was? A boy bringing a host of good things from good old Doctor Ussher. It is too good of him. The boy says he is asking the Government about me. Pray God it may have some effect. Among the things sent was an apple with “Don’t worry—cheer up” pricked on it. I am replying by notes in the pepper-pot: quite like a novel.

27/12/20. Unheard-of luxury this morning. The lad came in and made a roaring fire with a part of a bed, he then brought a dish of water which was put on the top, and when it was warm “I washed me.” Warm water to wash with—first time since I left Egypt. I am really getting accustomed and am ceasing to think about “svaboda” (liberty). Rumours from the Commandature that I am to be exchanged. Found that one of the guards spoke English, French and German. He took a note to Ussher from me with a request for paper and tobacco and instructions about my money. It appears that Ussher is trying to get the Government to put me in his house as a prisoner; I don’t think he’ll succeed. Late to-night the soldier returned with paper and said Ussher would be round to-morrow with the tobacco.

28/12/20. The blasted boy didn’t light my fire this morning so I had to get up in the freezing cold. It is still snowing. The mouse again last night mistook my bed for the Champs Elysées. Rumours again I am to be moved to the central prison to-day



and that my "svaboda" is to be soon. Food from Ussher and a note came. Two prisoners in my room. Doctor Ter Mikalian again and the richest man in Armenia. The doctor's crime is uncertain and the latter's drinking beer. It was too funny seeing the doctor again. What a baby's game this all is!

29/12/20. Wednesday. The bourgeois lit the fire this morning so I dressed in comfort. Early this afternoon Ussher arrived with a Procurateur, and a statement or protocol was written out. Ussher was so kind and considerate and hopes for freedom soon or at any rate a move to his house. "Inshallah!" He is going to send food daily, so that is good. The bourgeois, annoyed at the dampness of the wood, sent to his palace for some dry and this evening it has been like a furnace in here. There is some use in the bourgeoisie, after all. I do somehow feel I am nearer freedom to-day. Found another prisoner who talks German, so we had a long argument pro and contra Russians. To-morrow makes three weeks.

30/12/20. Good fire all day. No news from Ussher. Food is now regular from that good man.

31/12/20. The last day of the old year—and what a year! What will it bring? It brought the same Procurateur, who promised freedom for to-day. It brought food and a letter from Ussher wishing me a Happy New Year, as he said, "without irony." Asking me to make his house mine whilst I am in Armenia and saying I should be free to-day. . . . It brought more prisoners—chiefly for drinking vodka. It brings the year 1920 to a close; but it does not bring me freedom. To-morrow is New Year's Day. May it bring me peace and happiness and may I get out of this damned country. Been writing a lot of rot lately—pen runs away. Bundapet says "zavtra"—I don't think; anyhow it's warm and there's food.



## CHAPTER IV

1/1/21. New Year's Day. It brought a note from Ussher that all Government offices are closed to-day; but he will hurry them up to-morrow. He doesn't know they are also closed to-morrow, so it means no chance till the 3rd. I am so used to this that it makes no impression.

2/1/21. As I thought, no luck to-day. Try to-morrow. Ussher has written a reminder. The tribunal is so self-overworked that this delay is not to be wondered at. They brought in a new stove; twice as big, and it is scorching hot. Did a bit of sawing and unloading.

3/1/21. Will this bring "svaboda"? No, it has not. The boy who brings the dinner said that the Chezvichyka would certainly see to it to-day. I fear it's a case of "ruszki zavtra," unless some charge has turned up against me. Suppose I will know one way or the other to-morrow. I can understand the collapse of Russian war organisation with these principles at work.

4/1/21. Tuesday. Five days more and it makes a month in prison. Oh, I'm fed to the teeth with this monotony. The bourgeois is reading and Ter Mikalian sewing. He cuts the cotton with a table knife; wouldn't that make a housewife squirm? I am writing this 3/1/21 and it refers to that evening.—Again 4/1/21. Seem to have missed a day; the doctor says it is 6/1/21. If so, yesterday brought nothing, as usual, but sugar, matches and tobacco, a gift of the Soviet. Must ask Ussher for a book.

6/1/21 then.—Now he says it's the 5th.

5/1/21. Have asked for a book to be sent this afternoon but it has not come. Note from Ussher that the Court is very busy—well, it's its own damned fault. Am bitten to death and I can't catch the devils.

6/1/21. Ussher sent some magazines and a book, "Turkish Memories," all of which I finished in the day.

7/1/21. Tobacco leaves came to-day, but I'm no good at making cigars. Ussher is sending another note to the Chezvichyka. Rather like his former President. Have asked for more books, including a William. Bundapet is letting me have my papers back. Have completely given up thinking of freedom; it will come one day unless I die first, so "was macht es?"

8/1/21. Friday. Last night I wrote :

If you've ever walked to Ludlow  
Over Clee's grey tops,  
You can pass through Dunley's clover  
Or through Tenbury's hops.

You will pass through fields and hedges,  
Rutted cart-tracks too,  
And o'er streamlet stepping-stones,  
Often far and few.

And when you've clambered up to Clee,  
Take a look around,—  
God in Heaven baked with leaven  
When He made that ground.

Little wisps of bluish smoke-cloud  
Rising from the farms,  
And the good old oaks and chestnuts  
Rival Egypt's palms.

Here and there a dog is barking,  
Here a cow will low.  
Aren't you filled with God's contentment?—  
Yes, I told you so.

## SIX PRISONS

Just look forward to the westward—  
 Trees and trees and trees,  
 And the river at the bottom  
 Gliding on with ease.

Hereford lies in front of you,  
 Worcester lies behind;  
 Each has beauties quite unequalled,  
 Each a different kind.

Down the hill you now must hurry—  
 There lies Ludlow town,  
 Gleaming in the summer sunlight,  
 White and red and brown.

It's a walk the Gods invented  
 Ere e'en knights were bold.  
 You must make it pretty often  
 'Fore you grow too old.

(After that we'll take a motor,  
 If you cannot bike;  
 But if that's too fast and modern—  
 Bath-chair if you like.)

9/1/21. More books from Ussher and a note saying he had no reply to his letters. It appears the British Mission has left Tiflis, but Ussher wired my whereabouts to Tabriz and Tiflis last week. Three mice are dead from strychnine we sprinkled on the floor. I have a William at last—the Comedies. Don't seem to be able to get rid of the lice "no-how." Am absolutely resigned. A Bolshevik Divisional Commander strolled in when the others were away at the tribunal; he is in prison for drinking. We spoke in German and discussed Bolshevism. His faith in it is amazing. His eyes sparkle at the thought of India.

10/1/21. Two of the old Government were brought in to-day; so we are now five, a collection of bourgeoisie. Arakelian came to see me this morning. He wants to leave. He says Chachatouni is in Constant and Kayalian has left ten days ago for Tiflis; I'm glad for

him, poor lad : he was scared. I wonder if Shura has gone too ?

11/1/21. My Communist comrade came in and harangued my companions this morning ; it was most amusing. Ussher sends more books, but no tobacco, which I have asked for three times. Perhaps he is trying to convert me. I think he is really one of the good men of the world.

12/1/21. Arakelian came again and promised to give Ussher my money, which I since hear he has done. Papazian, the young ex-Turkish officer, is in prison ; I am to teach him French. It will be a funny job—Turkish-French. Am reading very fast. Just finished "The Life of Henry Drummond" ; he must have been out of the ordinary, but a bit too pious for my liking.

And that is the last entry.

The diary is a poor one, since I was too frightened to enter everything in it in case it should be taken from me.

I was made to sign a paper stating that I would not leave Erivan without Bolshevik permission, and Dr. Ussher kindly asked me to live in his house, one of the few houses that were not requisitioned.

As regards prison life, by far the most dreadful experience is that of being awakened at night by the faltering steps of some wretched man being led to his death. The cursing of a sentry, the thudding of a rifle-butt, a groan and the dragging of the half-stunned man out into the courtyard and through the clanging prison gates. Should the sentry stop outside one's own door, then indeed did one hold one's breath, and the strained listening of the prisoners

conjured up imaginary sounds of weeping and of chains.

There was no water in the prison with which to wash, and the lice and fleas became worse and worse. We used to tell stories, one to another, and at times were in the best of humour; at others irritable and nervous, apprehensive of our fate, despairing of freedom.

Under Bolshevism one can never have relief from apprehension, since one is perfectly liable to re-arrest within twenty-four hours of leaving prison, simply because of some remark one may have made about the prison, or very often on the same charge as before. I never heard of anyone in either our prison or the bigger civil prison who had had a trial of any sort.

Amongst the many interesting stories told in the prison were the following about the two famous Russian clowns, Blim and Blam.

The scene was Moscow, in a State dancing-hall to which Lenin had come for the evening. Many people had given exhibition dances or sung or played an instrument, and Blim and Blam, who had been looking on, were urged by the crowd to "give a turn." This they refused to do, saying they would be arrested if they imitated any political leader, which form of art they were famed for. Lenin was thereupon appealed to, and he promised that no harm should befall them.

A few minutes passed, and Blim staggered into the centre of the room carrying a heavy dressing-case and a huge pile of papers which took all his strength to hold and balance.

Enter Blam, who asks what he is doing.

Says Blim: "I am looking for a house. Last year I filled in my first application, and all this year I have been signing the other papers, and now I am looking for the signature of the President of the Union of Sovietic Federative Socialistic Polar Republics and I can't find him."

The second and rapidly succeeding scene showed the two, having found their house, proceeding to furnish it. Blim enters with two huge photographs of Lenin and Trotsky, and Blam with boxes and bags. The trouble is what to do with the pictures. Blim does not know.

Blam suggests: "This one (Trotsky) we will hang, and this one (Lenin) we will put against the wall." The whole was said quite calmly, but the meaning was apparent to the crowd, and their laughter showed appreciation. Nevertheless, both Blim and Blam were arrested for this before the evening was over.

The only other story I remember was told of a Jew in Paris who was welcoming a colleague who had just come from Russia.

1st Jew. Well, Aaron, and how many of our brothers are on your Soviet?

2nd Jew. We are all Hebrews, Isaac, except the President; he is a Russian.

1st Jew. Ach, these Russians, how they do butt in.

One morning I was walking round and round the courtyard, and noticed a poor Armenian peasant sitting on a stone trying to keep himself warm in the sun, for his clothes were of but one thickness and the



holes showed the bare flesh. As I came round a second time he began to sing "God save the King" in English. I stopped and asked him how he had learnt it, and it appeared he had been employed by the British at Batoum and had come into Armenia to fight for his country. His crime was refusing to hand over a pair of socks the American N.E.R. had given him to a Bolshevik soldier during Red week.

Red week is an interesting institution. It occurs about once every three months, during which time any Red soldier can do exactly what he likes to the civilian population; take what he wishes, sleep where he wills, go where he pleases.

Occasionally I sawed wood to keep warm. At other times we danced "gopaks." It was the evenings that were long and hopeless. One walked up and down the room, then in figures of eight, then by placing one foot directly in front of the other, then the same backwards—anything to relieve monotony, anything new, different, odd. . . .

Several of my companions left us in the night and were not heard of again. Some were taken to the big civil prison and tortured. The method was simple.

A dungeon filled with water and about six prisoners at a time standing therein for the whole night whilst the water froze. In the morning their fellow-prisoners were detailed to cut them out. Most of those that underwent this torture died.

Both prisons were full, ours holding about two hundred and fifty and the civil prison about a thousand.

Of the men who came and went, one of the most

striking was the little Bolshevik I mention in my diary—a small man with a mass of curly hair who had been a cavalry trooper in the German war and a Divisional General in the Red Army. He was in prison for drinking and used to regale us with tales of Red Armyism, alternating with outbursts of enthusiasm for Bolshevism in this strain.

“And everything was nationalised at once, the rich houses were plundered and we all got drunk, and thousands of people were killed or died of disease and cold.”

“And do you think it a good idea?”

“Magnificent. Communism is the only hope for the poor people in Russia.”

“How is that?”

“Because they’ll die quicker and not have to toil so long under capitalist domination.”

Then he would roar with laughter and whisper :  
“It’s all ghastly, but a man must live.”

During the counter-revolution this man fought on our side and eventually escaped into Persia.

Another man I remember well was the editor of the Armenian Socialist newspaper, who was arrested for protesting against the requisitioning. He was inconsolable during his short stay in my cell, since his baby girl had just died from lack of milk. He told us how his wife had died in child-birth and how he had bought milk for his baby from the N.E.R. Then the Bolsheviks entered Erivan, and they took away the last tin of condensed milk, in spite of his protests.

Rumours leaked into prison of plots for counter-revolution and for releasing the prisoners. Names

made the round of the cells—names of leaders of Armenia who had been quietly put away or were in hiding till the time arrived for the counter-revolution. One lived in a state of excitement and fear; hope rose and fell and people invented and enlarged in order to give hope to themselves and their hearers. Daily new prisoners had come in and daily had gone out, but those that came and went rapidly were Russians. The Armenians were being trained in Communist discipline, and were kept in the prisons longer.

I remember two Russians who came into the prison and stayed with us three days. They had been arrested for drinking by a Battalion Kommissar. Their cup of joy was full on the third day to see this same Kommissar enter the prison gates, having been arrested for drinking vodka, by the Brigade Kommissar.

The humour of these frequently occurring situations has never been apparent to the Bolshevik leaders, any more than the humour of employing a high judiciary official who thought England was "just the other side of Constantinople, by Bulgaria."

Two pieces of information will send one's audience into a roar of doubting mirth, anywhere east of Belgrade; and those are that the West End of London is paved with wood and that London stretches from east to west over ten miles.

The whole of the time I was in prison there was a constant stream of people passing over the hills into Persia, escaping from the dread of arrest, which to me, at any rate, is an intolerable weight that is ever hanging over one's head, clouding one's vision and

powers of action, and which fades away like magic the moment one is free of Bolshevik rule.

It took some time for the Armenians to shake off their stunned feeling and begin to plan, hope and plot for the overthrow of their oppressors. So sudden had been the revolution that, in the outlying districts, little of the significance of the loss of their independence had been understood. But now rumours again broke out, and rumours of hope amongst an oppressed people are a sign of awakening desire for liberty. The story passed round that the great national hero Andranik was in Persia and would shortly advance north; that he had hurried over from America, and that President Wilson was coming as well in order to see that the Armenian boundaries were in keeping with his former decision. Others said the Tsar had been found in Siberia and was leading an army westwards. Others that Trotsky was dead and that Lenin had been killed.

It is amazing how those that hope such things will cling to the rumour and even add a little bit of secret hope thereto.

But nothing like that did happen. Andranik was still in America wondering why he had bothered to hold the Western Front for the British Caspian Force, wondering why his country had had faith in western Allies. . . .

The only people who thought themselves lucky to have Bolshevik rulers were the Tartar inhabitants of Eriwan, who had been very thoughtlessly treated by the previous Government; but even these were soon to have a shock, for their leader, Ali Khan, was

arrested as a bourgeois because he weighed twenty-five stone. At least there may have been another reason, but not sufficient for arrest, since Ali Khan was the last person to run himself into danger by counter-revolutionary activities. He probably had some wine in his cellar. No, for he was a strict Mohammedan; so we must put him down with the thousand and one others as one likely to take part in counter-revolution, and consequently worthy of imprisonment.

Although nearly the whole of Armenia had been overrun by the Red army, two mountainous districts in the south were never invaded, and these were Karabagh and Zanguezur. The mountains were too high and the peasants too independent and national, and thither went many of the officers and men of the old Armenian army, deserting at night from the barracks where they had now become soldiers of the Soviet.

I have mentioned earlier the former Minister for War, Ruben Pasha, and I will now relate how he fared since the revolution and what he did in Zanguezur.

Ruben was a Turkish Armenian who hated Russia nearly as much as he hated Turkey, and therefore refused to escape northwards with his colleagues. He left with a few of his trusted bodyguard <sup>1</sup> (Mauserists) for the hills in Zanguezur.

There he started to organise the local party of the

<sup>1</sup> All Armenian national leaders have a bodyguard of devoted men who come from their leader's village and never leave him when he stirs abroad, sleeping outside his door wherever he may rest. They are called "Mauserists" from the large-butted revolvers they always carry.



*Photo, Kadewe, Berlin*

GENERAL DRO

[To face p. 72.]





Dashnakzutoun and to get in touch with Karabagh and the west-lying province of Sassoun, which is famed for its horsemen and their fighting qualities.

Much of his information he collected for himself, entering Erivan disguised as a Tartar and telling his friends who were in hiding of his plans and hopes; watching the position of the Red outposts and spying out the land generally.

Of all this the Bolsheviki were ignorant, since the secret was kept within the party, and the party never betrays.

In Karabagh another leader was organising.

He was Lieut.-Colonel Nidjdé, an Armenian of Bulgaria, who had served as a captain in the Bulgarian army. For some time before the *débâcle* he had been holding the south-eastern front against armed bands of Russians who had been playing Turkey's game, and successfully prevented some of the best Armenian troops from being used on the Western Front.

Nidjdé had met with considerable success himself, and had taken many prisoners, some of whom he used in the front line against their former comrades.

Difficulties of communication were accentuated by the snow, and Ruben Pasha did not concentrate enough on getting liaison with Nidjdé before his plans matured. This led, later on, to a loss of strength which we could little spare at the time.

In other villages due north-east of Erivan and in the Sassoun country such people as the Governor of the Erivan Province, the field officers of the old G.H.Q., and the general officers of the Eastern Front were finding shelter and keeping in touch by means of notes hidden

in the yokes of the bullock carts that went from village to village on their daily duties.

These things were happening whilst I was in prison, and I will now tell of how the world appeared to me when I left the prison gates and hoped they were the last I should ever be behind.

A vain hope, alas! as the future will tell.

The snow was thick upon the ground, but the sun shone and the air was clear and fresh.

The town seemed quieter than was its wont over a month ago. I looked in at a little shop near the prison and bought a piece of sausage, then, proceeding on my way, made for the centre of the town. I met a man I had known before the revolution. He saw me, smiled sadly and turned down a side street. I gathered he was afraid to speak to me, and I learnt later that I was correct.

Outside the hotel I met Parmejani, the Italian merchant. We spoke in French. He was glad I was free at last. Things were in a bad way. His shop had been raided. He had protested. He wanted to leave but the Bolsheviki would not let him take away his stock of goods. Had I received the sardines and bread he had sent twice a week by Joseph? I explained I had not, but thanked him for his kindness.

We saw now another of Joseph's little tricks, and kicked ourselves for our faith in such a one.

Had I heard rumours of counter-revolution? I had not. He believed there was something in it. A Red officer passed and eyed us askance. We parted. Fear was on us both.

I felt restless. I walked on and back again. A man

congratulated me on my liberty and told me the civil prison was crowded and a private house had been chartered as an annexe.

I passed Arakelian. He seemed pleased to see me and urged me to escape before I was re-arrested. I told him I was on parole and could not leave. He said he was thinking of making his way to Georgia. Georgia, he told me, would be overrun any day now, since the Bolsheviki were organising Armenian raiding parties into the southern provinces which could be an excuse for intervention.

How would it all end? Was it a nightmare?

I saw Chalgadzian. He was humming "Madelon," which he generally did. He cursed Joseph, and we agreed to dine in the Champs Elysées if we ever got out of this alive. A band marched down the street playing the Internationale. Chalgadzian sang the Russian words, and as the last two lines were blared forth he dropped his voice to a whisper and finished the song as: "L'Internation-na-a-ale, la plus grande blague du monde."

His other joke was the substitution of "Lenin, Trotsky et Le Grand," for "Joffre, Foch et Clemenceau" in "Madelon," changing also "nous avons gagné la guerre" into "nous avons perdu la guerre."

It was all very bitter and very sad.

We parted, and I walked back again through the town, wondering how I could get out of the whole nightmare.

At every corner some poor starving man, woman or child, with scarcely a rag to their backs and no shoes, stood in the snow whimpering and begging for food.

Often they fell and lay dying on the pavement, and it was left to the Russians to kick the body off the public footpath into the gutter, where it lay till the cart came round, picked it up and took it just outside the town, where large pits were being dug by the native peasants to receive the dead.

A Russian told me it was good to employ Armenian peasants at the digging of graves because when they died at their work it was no trouble to kick them in on top of the rest.

A little child, naked except for a piece of sacking round its waist, passed me, holding out its hand and whimpering in that strange pitiful manner that starving people have. Whether it was a boy or a girl I could not tell, but from the form of its legs, which were like match-sticks, I gathered it to be the latter. I looked at her, fascinated. Her little stomach distended out of all proportion, her head covered in scabs, and her shoulder-blades visible through the parchment-like skin. I gave her what was left of my sausage. She still whimpered and walked on, holding the sausage as though she did not understand it was meant to eat. "Eat it," I said; "eat it." . . .

Doctor Ussher explained to me afterwards, what I had never realised before, that after a certain stage starving people cannot eat; their digestive organs have ceased to function and it takes six months of warmth, care and liquid food to bring them round.

I had not seen such misery before I went into prison, and yet the whole while the Bolsheviki never ceased praising the system that had brought liberty to the people.

It could not have been worse under the reign of the Anti-Christ, and some people hold that that day has come for Holy Russia.

Whether things are better now, I know not. English Communists point to the export of grain from Russia as proof of prosperity on the same day as the "Pravda" pleads for English capitalists to feed the children on the Volga. It is all very inconsistent.

During my last week in prison a new chief of the Tcheka had been sent from Moscow, the great terrorist Artarbekov.

This man, a well-known sadist, had earned fame by executing his prisoners himself, and had killed with his own hand over a hundred officers at one turn, including the hero of Galicia, General Russky.

His method of execution consisted generally of shooting his victim in the stomach and watching him die. Other well-authenticated tales of his methods are not fit for publication.

In appearance he was short, with a square red beard, small blue eyes set close together, with the saving grace of having a perfectly-formed mouth, which was his great attraction. He was dressed in a suit of black leather, and carried a revolver in his inside breast pocket, on which his hand always rested. During the war he had been an officer in the Imperial army, and was of good family, being, I gathered, half Russian and half Armenian. His reputation for discovering plots was very high, which he had even been known to inaugurate in order to fill up his prisons.

He had escaped death very often by his foresight,



which led him to leave a country forty-eight hours before the outbreak of a counter-revolution.

That he was any worse than Ouritzky, the head of the Moscow Tcheka, murdered by Kanegnisser, is doubtful, though he was fonder of cocaine.

It was Artarbekov who ordered the torture of Kanegnisser, which was that of cutting with a razor into the bare flesh the epaulets, decorations, sash of the order of St. George and stripe down the trouser leg. This operation was repeated twice more after suitable intervals, and then the boy died.

The first act this man did on his arrival, the day before I left prison, was to forbid stoves throughout both prisons. The second act was taking place as I made my way towards Doctor Ussher's house.

At the corner of one of the side streets was a detachment of Red cavalry, a small crowd of people and an old carriage with two horses. In this were seated Celine and Dro.

As I came up the carriage and its escort drove off.

I asked the meaning of this, and was told Dro had been sent to Moscow.

To many people it was the end of all things. Dro, the great national leader, had left his people.

Wiser men saw the reason. Dro was too great a power amongst Armenians. Dro was a national leader; therefore the sooner he was out of the way the easier the subjugation of the people.

From the hour of his departure, all through the afternoon and the next day came rumours of how the peasants had stopped the carriage, killed the escort and Dro had escaped into Karabagh.

How Dro had turned off the main road at Akhta and fled across country to Zanguezur. How Celine had been killed by his own escort and Dro escaped with their help.

But none of these rumours was true. The carriage went to Dilijan and Baku, and Dro was sent on to Moscow, where he was employed for some time in a military capacity. Now he keeps a small tobacco shop in Moscow, and no doubt wonders how he let himself be removed from Armenia.

Probably he thought it better for his people to suffer persecution than to make their lot harder by organised rebellion.

It was a good move on Artarbekov's part, and took away a pillar of strength from the Dashnakzutoun.

The next greatest of the general officer leaders of Armenia during the 1914-1918 war was Hamazaspe, who was in the civil prison, and was to suffer a ghastly death in the month of February. This man was especially hated by the Bolsheviki owing to his success against the Red armies during the raiding days of early 1920, just after the invasion of Azerbaijan.

After having watched Dro's departure, I continued up the street on my way to Doctor Ussher's house. I remember passing a dog frozen to death lying just off the footpath on the snow. The streets were filthy. Wherever the snow had been banked aside by the passing of bullock wagons, there one would find disclosed dead domestic animals, rags of clothes, strips of leather, heaps of refuse, tins, cabbage leaves and bones. The snow was the only hider, the frost the only disinfectant.

Outside Doctor Ussher's house, the American flag hung limply in the frosty air, strangely out of place, strangely alone.

I was welcomed with all the courtesy of days gone by, and in the living-room of this house I felt I was awakening slowly from a long nightmare. There was an atmosphere of peace I had not known for so long.

We had lunch—most excellent, and of American canned production. Then we talked.

It appeared he had learnt on Christmas day of my imprisonment from Joseph, of all people.

He had had great difficulty in carrying on the relief work owing to Bolshevik interference.

His house had not been raided officially so far. Occasionally Red soldiers had banged on the door seeking admission, but they had been dealt with in a proper English fashion, by being propelled downstairs from behind by Doctor Ussher. This method of dealing with Russians is so strange to them that they are generally too bewildered to do anything but submit.

I have seen Doctor Ussher himself pick up a Red soldier by the scruff of his neck and throw him into the road because he had commandeered one of the N.E.R.'s bullock carts. These exhibitions of natural indignation left me in a state of helpless terror, and yet for this very reason the Bolsheviks were rather scared of the big American doctor and left him in peace.

To Doctor Ussher's house during those three months came more tragedies than most people have

met with in a lifetime. Everyone in trouble came for comfort, and the comfort was good.

One Russian woman came begging him to look after her few remaining trinkets. Her husband, a general, had been murdered in Russia; her crippled son had been arrested in Baku for being the son of his father, and she had fled to Armenia. Now the Bolsheviki had taken all her personal belongings and persecuted her for her dead husband's sake.

Another brought a rug for safety, which was all that remained to her of her father's property. She herself was arrested shortly after because her husband was a Social Democrat in prison in Moscow. Such tragedies were our daily fare.

One Sunday afternoon, I remember, there came to the house three Protestant priests, two Armenian Church pastors and two or three lay brethren of the orphanages.

They spoke with Doctor Ussher in Armenian for some time, and then the small assembly sank on their knees in fervent prayer, beseeching God to save Armenia from the Russian terror. It was one of the most impressive things I have ever witnessed. For fully five minutes we prayed and a great calm settled over us.

In how many houses those same prayers were uttered it is impossible to say; even as it is impossible to convey in words the terror under which we all lived.

The day after I left prison I went for a walk through the town, and found the Parliament building surrounded with Red cavalry.

I asked passers-by the reason, and they did not know. I went to find Arakelian in the Town Commandant's office. He also did not know the reason for the cavalry, but informed me that an order had been given out that all former officers of the Armenian Army were to report themselves at the Parliament building for duty as officers in different branches of the Red Army.

I walked back to the building and idly watched officers going in. The one came without his overcoat, the other without his gloves, expecting to sign on and then to return to their daily tasks. But whilst officers continued to come in, no one came out.

Then the question passed through the crowd: "Why don't they come out?" Time passed. . . .

Of a sudden the doors were flung open, an order was given to the cavalry, and every soldier drew his sword or rested his rifle on his knee with the finger round the trigger. Then from the building, marching in fours and marshalled by Red officers, came forth nearly a thousand officers of all ranks. They moved between the lines of cavalry and the whole party marched off at high speed, turning on to the Dilijan road, the cold, snow-bound road that leads to Baku.

When the whole thing became apparent, word ran like flame all over the town, and the consternation of the crowd was terrible to behold.

Without food, without extra clothing, without snow-boots, without being able to say good-bye to their families, the column left the town. Their



families ran after them with their overcoats and other articles of clothing, or a few pieces of coarse cake or black bread and grapes, but these poor women were sent back by the whip-lash of the Cossack, for daring to interfere with, or impede the will of the brothers of mankind. The cries of agony of the young women and mothers filled the roads.

Doctor Ussher was speechless with indignation. However, he set off at once to see the President of the Soviet, and protested in the name of humanity against that which he had witnessed.

When he asked the President why such a thing had been done, the reply was that Artarbekov had ordered it to prevent a counter-revolution, and as the Armenian army would not shoot their officers, it was necessary for Russia to show how a revolution should be conducted. The doctor asked why he had given permission to do such a thing. The President replied that he had no power over the *Chezvichyka*, for it was an organisation "*hors de la loi*."

The following day five hundred more officers were sent off in the same way—in all fifteen hundred. The aged General Nazebekian, who was seventy-three years old and had been the hero of Erzeroum in the Great War, was suffering from acute arthritis. He had asked an Armenian doctor to say that he could not walk, which was true. Amatouni, the second chief of the *Tcheka*, said to the doctor: "If you say that Comrade Nazebekian is too ill to walk, I'll shoot you as you stand."

The doctor replied Nazebekian could walk.

The general, therefore, supported by two colonels



of the Armenian Army, went on his way with the others.

The march was made with but very few halts till the frontier of Azerbaijan had been crossed, since the Russians feared attempts at a rescue. The road to Baku was littered with the bodies of poor officers, dead of hunger and cold in the midst of the terrible Caucasian winter.

Women too fell on the road, wives and mothers who had followed their loved ones in spite of the whip-lash and in spite of the weather. Over all Erivan there fell a silence. . . .

Waverers began to join secret organisations. The Dashnakzutoun circulated the story of the officers in every little village in the country.

The national spirit was awakening, more people drifted from the town at night, but this time not to fly but to carry the flaming torch through hamlet and village.

From this day, Doctor Ussher was besieged by parents begging his intervention on behalf of some officer or another who had gone on the long march to Baku.

No one knew what their fate would be and Doctor Ussher could do nothing.

Further scenes of indescribable tragedy were enacted in that little house. It seemed as if punishment for the wrongs of the world had been visited on us in this unhappy land. There seemed no hope, no end to the nightmare. Tragedy succeeded tragedy, not a man or woman had not tasted thereof. The nights disclosed no relief; the days brought sorrow.

Only in the secret places lay a ray of hope. Strong men gathered together and planned; weak men became strong in their love of country and longing for freedom. Under the hard exterior of Soviet rule could be heard the first rumblings of awakening Liberty.

## CHAPTER V

THE Near East Relief in Erivan was directly responsible for some ten orphanages, holding about two or three hundred orphans each, of which buildings, I think, two belonged to the British "Lord Mayor's Fund."

Doctor Ussher managed the whole, Peers ran the commissariat and I had the transport to deal with. Our staff consisted of Armenian doctors and managers, many of whom had been educated in American missionary schools in Turkey or in the United States.

To these orphanages were attached carpet-weaving and lace-making schools.

Had Doctor Ussher not stepped into the breach and taken over from those Americans who had fled the country, the orphans would have starved, the stores been pillaged by the Red troops and the prestige of America sunk as low as that of Great Britain.

For all in despair, for all true patriots, for all Social Revolutionaries, that faded American standard over his house meant the corner-stone of kindness and courage.

Daily the work went on : the feeding and clothing of the orphans, the carpet-weaving, the lace-making, and at every turn the Bolsheviki praised the organisation one minute, and interfered, commandeered, requisitioned and insulted the next.

In the face of all this, Doctor Ussher worked quietly and efficiently, interviewing Kommissars, retrieving commandeered fourgons and reporting weekly by various routes of the condition of the relief work, asking for further help.

The Near East Headquarters had determined to close down the whole station owing to the difficulty of working with the Bolsheviki, and when no reply came to Doctor Ussher's appeals, I told him it was useless to expect further help. His answer, however, was always the same: "I can never believe that my countrymen would desert Armenia in her difficulties. Help will come."

And long after he was proved right, and to this day the Near East Relief is carrying on in Erivan that marvellous work which covers Balkania, Anatolia, Trans-Caucasia and Syria.

While at work with this organisation, I had ample leisure to study Bolshevik methods, although at times I found it hard to keep my mouth shut or my sense of humour subdued.

Bolshevik organisation is certainly a *tour de force*, more especially the organisation of demonstrations. If the world is intended to know how indignant the people are over the wickedness of some important prisoner, a demonstration is immediately ordered by the Tchecka. A crowd of wretched peasants are assembled outside the prison who shout in unison, "Death to X, the traitor. Death to X." Those who do not shout loud enough are reminded of it by the Tchecka agents. The crowd then proceeds to the Kommissar of Justice, who seems to expect them.

There they again repeat the parrot cry. The Kommissar makes a little speech in which he thanks the people for their loyalty and promises that, as always, the will of the people shall prevail. The story is then put in all the Russian press, the wretched prisoner is then done away with, and one or two English newspapers thrill with joy over the democratic rule of Russia.

The same farce has been played quite recently during the funeral procession of Lenin, although one English newspaper had somewhat muddled the story and brought in much about "silent weeping crowds" and, in order to give more local colour, informed us that the weeping crowd called for "Ivanovitch." To those who know Russian the humour of a crowd shouting "the son of Ivan," is quite apparent. To those who do not, let them imagine a crowd at the funeral of any Mr. George Smith calling "We want John's son back again."

However, this only shows how successful Bolshevik methods are. Only the other day in Tiflis a crowd was organised calling for the death of the Georgian patriarch, which when reported in the Red Press reads very well and convinces an Oriental mind. But to those who know Georgia it is as improbable as a crowd of men in England calling for the death of their own fathers.

The cinema plays an important part in propaganda work. Every evening in Erivan, a cinema in the open air depicted the glories of life in Russia.

How well I remember two lantern slides, on one of which was drawn, very crudely, a Russian peasant

pushing his wooden plough along, dressed in rags, with bare feet. Underneath this picture was written : "What was."

The other picture showed a huge machine, a cross between a tank and a railway engine, on which sat a man who was holding a steering-wheel. The man wore new Russian boots, black trousers, a tail coat, white tie and bowler hat. Under this picture was written : "What will be."

Well, that is now two and a half years ago, and I do not expect that strange machine has yet appeared nor ever will.

Posters were much in evidence, chiefly directed against the Dashnakzutoun. One poster showed a man in a top hat and an Armenian holding a Mauser pistol in his hand. Over the former was written "England," over the latter "Dashnak." Underneath : "Our only two enemies."

Another poster showed a crowd of men, bare-footed, working in a field under the supervision of a man with a whip. In the distance arose a red sun out of which stepped a Red soldier bearing a red flag inscribed "Liberty." Underneath : "The Red Army brings liberty to the English proletariat."

A little social revolutionary who translated the inscription to me remarked : "It's enough to make you a damned capitalist." And certainly for a Socialist to see how his hopes and ideals have been rendered ludicrous and trampled out of recognition, it is a distinct push down the hill of Disillusion. But then those Socialists who have seen Bolshevism as ordinary mortals and not as Government tourists, do not see



Socialism in Bolshevism. We hold the latter to be the monstrosity produced by premature birth.

I understand, however, it is as easy to see prosperity in Russia if one is an *invité*, as it was for Catherine the Great to see the village peasants dressed in their masters' clothes, whilst the other inhabitants shivered behind the huts. It is also largely a matter of prejudice. Personally, I greeted the Bolshevik arrival in Erivan with great interest and a mind prejudiced slightly in its favour, but the prejudice became so warped that it broke and I clung to the only other straw that is left one.

I was told many interesting things by Kommissars during my breathing space of liberty. I was told that Miss Pankhurst, who was then in Moscow, was to be the first President of the English Soviet, since she wielded such power in the Labour world. Miss Pankhurst, I was informed, had been a revolutionary from her earliest days, when, as a child, she worked in a silver (*sic*) mine, drawing trucks by a chain fastened round her waist. She had seen her mother tortured in an English prison and her other sister chained to railings in a public highway. As a result she had become a Bolshevik, and I was cruel enough to reply that it was enough to make anyone do the same.

This perversion of fact, this exaggeration and twisting is essentially a Russian trait, though, I must say, that since my socialistic views have received some publicity, certain English members of the opposite camp have done their share of twisting with remarkably original results. I am accused of having

been a conscientious objector and of having suffered imprisonment for forgery. The accusations are immediately accepted as facts, but I have found that it is as difficult to argue with such convictions as it is with a Bolshevik. . . .

About this time the English coal strike took place, and the local Bolshevik newspaper was full of the "revolution" and bloodshed that had shaken the foundations of Great Britain. I am afraid I did not believe it, though each day there were fresh reports from Moscow of the shooting and the state of siege in London. The posters grew more daring and flaring, and to the crowd it appeared that England was a Red Republic and that Russian troops were already in the capital.

The defeat of Wrangel paled into insignificance beside this new information, and the "White Baron" was spoken of no more except, of course, that he had been made a lord by the English and now sat with "Lord" Deniken and "Lord" (Lloyd) George in the House of Nobles.

And so the days passed; the humour and the tragedy blended or in essence, the Armenian people poor, miserable and starving and the Russians proud in their power and rich with their loot.

And the whole while the prisoners increased and the proclamations on the walls told the people it was all being done for their benefit, like the boy who is thrashed "to make a man of him" and the drunkard who is imprisoned to make him an abstainer. But the white bread from Russia came not, neither the clothes nor the boots, and the reason was simple: there were

none to come. Even as the great Banks live on credit, so the people lived on promises.

I have mentioned previously that our other companion was Charles Peers, an Irish American who had served with the British army in Salonika as a Sergeant of Engineers. A bluff, hearty, amusing man was Peers, with a great and self-assured contempt for Bolsheviki of all shapes and sizes. He lived in a big house where Colonel Haskell, the American representative, had lived a year ago. The ground floor only was used. Upstairs were Soviet offices and from the balcony flew the Stars and Stripes. Outside the back door he kept a tame bear on a chain, and as the front door was always kept locked, he had no difficulty in guarding his house from unwelcome visitors the moment the bear's chain was undone.

Peers will go down in the annals of Bolshevism as the only man who ever dared pull a Kommissar's nose, and the manner of the pulling was this.

Peers received an order to report himself to the Chezvichyka, whither he accordingly went and was ushered into the presence of the great Artarbekov himself.

*Artarbekov.* Are you an American?

*Peers.* Yes.

*Artarbekov.* Is it true you carry a revolver on you?

*Peers.* Yes.

*Artarbekov.* Don't you know it is forbidden to carry arms in Soviet Russia?

*Peers.* This is Armenia. The autonomous Soviet State of Armenia.

*Artarbekov.* That's all you know. This is

Russia, and you will hand over your revolver at once.

*Peers.* Oh, will I?

And thereupon he bent forward, seized Artarbekov's nose between his finger and thumb and, mentioning a few things about the difference between Russians and Americans, gave it a very sharp and decided twist. I never really learnt what was the immediate result, but, at any rate, Peers kept his revolver and continued to carry it about. I dread to think what would have happened had his war service become known; I do not expect he would have been alive to-day.

Full of good cheer was Peers, even in the darkest days, and the method of his escape during the month of April is as thrilling as any man's.

Peers' behaviour seemed to have a good effect, for he was not further troubled except by constant threats of having his house requisitioned.

His subsequent escape across Turkey is memorable, amongst other things, since it was probably the only instance in which an Armenian girl crossed Anatolia unharmed. This was when he took his wife's sister with him and passed her off to the Turks as an American.

Not a day passed but news came of the requisitioning of one of the N.E.R. fourgons, drivers and load.

We soon found that written requests for their return were always mislaid, so Doctor Ussher generally took the matter into his own hands, and by hurling abuse at the Russian soldiery in Armenian and American, succeeded in rescuing his property undisturbed.

One night he invited the Kommissar of Justice to dinner, and, as a result of our conversation, I learnt later that I very nearly paid a second and more permanent visit to the prison.

This man's ignorance was amazing, his narrow-mindedness superb, his arrogance unequalled.

I told him I had looked in vain for any rule of the people by the people, for any control by the poorer classes. He laughed. "The people," he said, "are too ignorant. They do what they are told, and if they don't we make them. It is so simple." I agreed that it was; but it was not democracy.

I was then informed that democracy was the catchword of the bourgeois socialists and did not exist.

It was all very difficult.

He defended terrorism in the same way as Trotsky, saying that if people were not Bolsheviki it was better to put them out of the way. He laughed at the English Trade Union Delegation, and said they were shown the villages destroyed by the Germans and told it was done by Yudenitch and Alexiev, the white leaders. He thought they had seen too much in other directions, but, after all, they were only spies sent by "Lord" George. He also remarked that George Lansbury's sympathy with Bolshevism was very well acted but they had seen through him. I did not agree with this last remark and told him so.

His answer was typical: "We know. Anything you may say to the contrary is capitalist propaganda."

For Mrs. Snowden, he had no words bad enough. Apparently she had asked some awkward questions.

I was glad when he left and so was Doctor Ussher.



A man who was to play a sinister part in the future, the Kemalist Consul, I visited several times. He spoke German and had been captured by the Russians in 1916. He had watched the rise and fall of Kerensky and the beginning of Bolshevism, and had apparently had a very interesting though trying time. He had no illusions about Soviet Russia. He spoke of Koltchak and how he had refused to fly with his beaten troops. How he had been made to sweep the streets between lines of jeering soldiers, and of how he met his death.

He was bitter about the treatment of Muslims in Azerbaijan, and blamed England for all the troubles in the Near East.

He knew very little of the news of Europe, but remarked that the great English revolution was "some peasants who wanted more money and refused to work at hewing coal from the mountain side." He rather wondered why the troops did not shoot the peasants. From an Eastern point of view it would have been a difficult question to answer. . . .

He had been sent to Erivan immediately after the armistice at Alexandropol and, I gathered, was staying on in order to watch the Bolshevik foreign policy extend its agenda westwards. He knew that they dare not attack Turkey whilst Georgia remained independent, but he wondered how long that would be.

The Russian plan for the invasion of Georgia was subtle and typical. It was maturing all this month of January and early February, but it is strange they should have bothered to work it out in the way they did.



Between Armenia and Georgia lay a neutral zone of some twenty versts, over which there had been a certain bitterness in the past between the two countries.

Into this zone the Bolsheviki pushed Armenian Tchecka agents, and their work was to make the Georgians attack them. Once this was done the Soviet could send troops into Georgia to "defend the poor Armenian inhabitants of the neutral zone who had been set upon by the bourgeois menshevik government of Georgia." That, coupled with the cry of "Save our brother communists imprisoned in Tiflis," would be enough to show the world the fraternal feelings of Soviet Russia. This plot they carried out, and fighting took place in the neutral zone in early February, whilst troops were sent from Baku to the eastern frontier of Georgia. This was to be the third and last phase of the subjugation of three independent countries whose liberty had been guaranteed by Great Britain and the League of Nations.

Amongst those sent up to the neutral zone was the former chief of the Armenian Intelligence, Davoyentz, a man of extraordinary brilliance in his own department and one-time intelligence officer on the Grand Duke Nicholas' staff. He spoke Armenian, Russian, Turkish, German, French and English, all fluently, and managed, on his arrival at the Georgian frontier, to escape to Constantinople, where his information was of great value to the Allies.

During all this time the Bolsheviki were doing nothing to alleviate the distress of the peasant population, who were rapidly dying from cold and hunger.

The local cinema was commandeered as a kind of



*Photo, Walter Studios, N.Y.C.*

REV. CLARENCE D. USSHER, M.D.

*[To face p. 96.]*



workhouse into which were driven all those men, women and children who were at death's door.

I looked in there one day with Arakelian. The hall was pitch dark and the floor covered with the living, dying and dead.

The stench from this mass of humanity was indescribable, the groans heartrending, and the whole while more people were pushed into the room by the Red soldiery, who were doubtless clearing the streets in case some visitor from another country should happen on the town. Every morning an ox wagon would draw up in front of the cinema and the dead were placed therein. The greater number of people in the hall were children, and since they were dragged out by the arms, I was able to see how thin a human being could become before he died of starvation.

No attempt was made to feed these wretched people; no attempt to attend to them medically. It was just a miserable room which killed off the starving by the darkness, lack of food and filthy conditions.

There were no sanitary arrangements. . . . Once in the hall, no one came out alive. The carts took the bodies to the pits and returned for more.

I hear that things are better in Erivan to-day.

There are fewer people to die. . . . And it all seemed so unreal.

Once, on the outskirts of a town, I came upon a dead woman. By her side sat her husband, who was apparently shortly to follow her. He held a baby—their baby, whimpering, naked, starved and cold. He also was crying, for he knew not what to do.

I watched, pitying, impotent, awed. And the

man, even as the beasts, in a last effort to save the baby from the cold, began to lick his child all over. I feared cannibalism at first; but no, he was simply trying to keep it warm.

Curiosity led me back there an hour later. There were three dead in a little heap. And I wondered, and prayed that all who believed in Communism as explained by Russia might see such things. . . .

I never told Doctor Ussher this; it would have hurt too much.

About the 12th of February Doctor Ussher invited Madame Korotkova and her husband, Shura and the little tenor singer Leon Mischranian<sup>1</sup> to an evening meal.

Madame Korotkova was a most excellent pianist, Leon a delightfully melodious drawing-room tenor.

She played Schumann and Schubert, Beethoven and Brahms, Russian folk-songs and Armenian melodies, and we tried to forget the horrors around us. Leon sang Schubert's songs, "Vesti la Giuba" and old French airs that brought back such memories of Paris, that we left the music awhile and rushed into reminiscences.

"Do you remember Mont Parnasse and La Rotonde?"

"Yes, and over the river, and the Boulevard des Italiens on a summer's evening."

"Oh for the Rue de la Paix and the Bois!"

But it was all far away and we were in Erivan—dark, cold, miserable Erivan, living under the greatest terror the world had ever known, and wondering why

<sup>1</sup> I am not certain that this was his name.

the Armenians should be crucified yet again, and whether God really knew what was going on.

And Doctor Ussher said it was the travail of the world and that God was watching.

And Shura laughed and did not believe, whilst I sighed because I did.

The evening broke up early, for there were fixed times for being in your rooms, and being out late meant prison until they remembered you again.

Leon lived in a room of ten feet by six with one other friend; Doctor Korotkova and his wife in one a little larger with a poor little Armenian orphan girl; Shura in a garret with three other men.

We talked late that night—Doctor Ussher and I, and he told me to read the “Revelation,” which I started to do. A day or two after he asked if I could see any connection between the “beast” and his doings in Russia.

It became rather clearer then. . . .

And two days passed, till the 14th of February in the evening, when our hopes rose afresh, and once more we hoped the future would be kind to Armenia.

It was then that I heard of the secret plans for the overthrow of the Bolsheviki.

In many quarters of the town the Dashnakzutoun held secret meetings and swore in new members.

They told off each man for his separate job and his special place, informed him where he could obtain arms if he had none buried under his house, and arranged for so many men to capture the prison, the barracks, the Soviet departments and all strategic points.

No one knew who was at the head of these arrange-



ments for Erivan, but Reuben Pasha was at the back of the whole movement, and his spies brought orders which were implicitly obeyed.

Things were moving apace, and we nodded more cheerily to each other as we passed in the streets.

There was an uneasiness about the Kommissars; rumours had come from the hills, but all was well with them. Had they not two infantry battalions, one regiment of cavalry and one of artillery in the town alone? Were not the chieftains of Armenia in prison?

One or two more people were arrested, but they were not in the movement and could tell nothing, although the water torture was applied.

Neither Doctor Ussher nor I were hopeful of success; the odds were too heavy: besides, we were in a bad geographical position. We knew there might not be much difficulty in taking the town itself; but of what use was that to the country as a whole? South of Erivan rose the hills that continued unbroken into Persia. West, an escarpment born of the southern range. East, an arm of hill land dropping northwards. North, the river Arax and the great plain of Erivan.

A town in a horseshoe of hills—a magnet with the Arax as its horizontal bar.

We learnt that the attack would come from the plain, in order to draw away the Red troops from the main body, who would then come in from the south.

Who was to command we did not know. When the attack would take place, or how they would reach

Erivan without coming into contact with Red troops, likewise we knew not.

And so we passed a day of suspense and stillness.

For the past week Doctor Ussher had been trying to have me relieved of my parole in order that I might leave, but without much success.

Again, therefore, during the days of suspense, we made another effort, but since they had lost record of me, and the Kommissar who had arranged my prison release was in Baku, no one paid much attention. One might possibly have escaped at this stage of the proceedings, but since Doctor Ussher was my guarantee, he would have had to pay the penalty, which under Bolshevism means either prison or death. Therefore there was no question of flight.

On the evening of the fifteenth all available carriages were commandeered and a number of armed Kommissars and officers left the town by the southern road. It appeared that events were moving.

Two eighteen-pounder guns also left, but not a word was said as to their destination or the reason for departure.

On the morning of the sixteenth the Bolshevik press spoke of "slight trouble with robber bands in the hills behind Erivan." We knew the truth, and the smiles from the people who read the newspaper which was pasted on to a wall showed that they too knew more than some Bolsheviks.

We were having lunch that afternoon, Doctor Ussher and I. I remember well I was raising a glass of water to my lips but I did not drink. Away in the distance we heard a noise. . . .

Could it be? We rushed to the glass-covered verandah. Yes, it was. There it is again. . . . Rifle shots. . . . Faint, very faint. Then a short burst of machine-gun fire. We looked at each other and smiled. The clouds were lifting.

But it was far away, and we had no right to expect too much, so we went back to our lunch.

The faint sound of firing continued at intervals during the afternoon. I went out at about three o'clock and the town seemed excited. Troops were moving south.

In the evening a crowd in the square showed that news had been posted. There were no smiles. The crowd was very quiet. I moved towards the notice. People gave way. I saw a long list of names—a short paragraph all in Armenian. A friend near by translated.

It was a decree signed by Avis, Minister for War, aged twenty-two, and counter-signed by Artarbekov. It informed us shortly that if the Dashnakzutoun did not cease the revolt, the undermentioned leaders of Armenia now in prison would be shot.

Many names of note were there. General Hamazaspe, the peasant leader, Cachasnouni, the ex-premier, colonels, ministers, revolutionaries, journalists, doctors, peasant leaders—all social-revolutionaries, all members of the Second International, all Dashnakists.

No wonder the crowd was silent.

That evening was held a secret meeting of the party. The decision to be made was terrible. To continue the fight with the hope of freeing the whole people and the other five or six hundred prisoners and sacrifice

the hundred, or call off the whole thing and suffer the worse retribution that would fall on the people as a result of their counter-revolutionary activity.

Speeches were made by relations of the condemned men and by the old socialists, and, to the eternal credit of the Dashnakzutoun, it was held that where the freedom of the people lies in the death of individuals, it is always expedient that a man die for the people, and therefore the fight should continue. This decision was unanimous, more especially since it was realised how difficult it would be to call off the attacking bands.

On the morning of the seventeenth the firing was much closer, and bursts of fire were seen shooting out from the hills. The streets were filled with Red soldiery moving up and civilians watching the mountains. Yet there was no disorder.

News filtered through from shepherds entering the town.

The O.C. of the field battery had been shot by his Kommissar, who had immediately suffered the same fate at the hands of the gunners. The reason being that the O.C., an Armenian, had refused to open fire on the attacking peasants. The whole battery had then gone over to the invaders.

In the street I met my little Bolshevik friend of prison days, the ex-divisional commander. He was full of excitement, and informed me that he was not going to fight for the Bolsheviki, since he was fed up with the whole thing. I did not answer. I feared a trap. But he kept to his statement, and later on was a most deadly shot on the side of Armenian independence.

All through the night the spasmodic bursts of rifle and machine-gun fire were louder and clearer than before. But about midnight there came a lull.

Not knowing what the next day would bring forth, Doctor Ussher and I went to bed about midnight to the tune of marching soldiery and the crunching of snow under their feet.

At about 6.30 on February the 18th, which was the following day, I awoke to find Doctor Ussher shaking me by the shoulder. "Listen," he said. . . .

And then it came, rifle shots, Lewis guns, Vickers guns rattling like 1914-1918, and on the breeze were borne the shouts of the attackers, "Haistan, Haistan" (Armenia, Armenia).

I dressed in about five minutes and, taking a revolver, I rushed into the street.

All around was firing, bullets whistled overhead. The attack was coming from the north, and thither I ran.

Up the steep streets, followed and preceded by the inhabitants of the town. Every man knew his place. Every man was armed. From every house emerged old men and young, their women handing them the bandoliers and rifles that had been hidden since December.

"Haistan, Haistan." The excitement was tremendous. On the north-eastern hill we met the first band of peasants. We kissed each other, we cheered. We placed Vickers guns in position and opened fire. Then came the call, "To the prison. To the prison."

We rushed downhill shooting, calling, shouting.

On every housetop stood a sniper—an Armenian. In the centre of the town, two companies of Bolsheviki were taken like rats in a trap and marched away. The crowd increased.

“To the prison. To the prison.” There, at last. We shouted for the gates to be opened. They were unlocked, but once inside a deathly stillness reigned. We halted. Something had happened and we were afraid. . . .



## CHAPTER VI

WE opened a few cells and the prisoners stumbled into the light, emaciated, weak, crying. Feverishly they pointed to the centre block. We moved across into the galleries through the opened iron gates. Blood, more blood. . . . We followed. From a door, across the passage, down a corridor and at the top of a flight of stairs leading to the dark stairs we halted.

Twenty to thirty bodies naked, half clothed, soaked in blood, hacked to pieces. Some we identified—Hamazaspe, Colonel Korganov. . . . Back to the cell. We opened the door. Half an inch of blood on the floor, pieces of flesh, cord, bits of clothes, more dead bodies. Just then a cry went up. Back to the steps and below a newly dug pit had been discovered. In this were the rest. . . . Seventy-five in all.

Sickened, appalled, we stumbled back into the light. The other cells were opened, and all the prisoners freed, but in silence. They had heard the whole massacre extending through two nights. We learnt how it had happened.

On the night of the sixteenth, the first fifty had been taken out and shot against the prison wall, then buried in the pit.

On the night of the seventeenth, so many warders had been withdrawn to swell the fighting ranks that

it was left to a little Jewish Kommissar to arrange the shooting of the others. He ordered the Armenian Red soldiery to help. They refused. He took two Communists of Tartar extraction to help him, and herded twenty-five of the prisoners into a cell on the ground floor. Time was pressing, shots were nearing the prison. The hands and feet of the twenty-five were bound with cord and the door was shut. Two machine-guns were then trained on to the windows and proceeded to fire into the cell. The imprisoned men fell flat on their faces and crawled under the windows for shelter. Their cries rent the air. The machine-guns were next moved outwards and cross fire was played on them, to hit those crouched between the windows.

They were in a hurry. The shouts of the attackers grew close. The machine-guns were left, and the little Jew and his two comrades, armed with axes, rushed in and finished the job. They then dragged the bodies to the pit, but we had surprised them. All three were caught hiding in the prison, after the prisoners and soldiery had scoured the place. They were locked up immediately in separate cells and guards put over them, but transferred shortly after to the Parliament building.

All this time fighting was going on in the streets and on the outskirts of the town, so back we went to swell the conflict.

The story of the massacre flew round the town and the cry for vengeance drowned all else.

The freed prisoners, with their bundles on their backs, grew excited with the joy of liberty and the

reunion of families, and the kisses of happiness we all received blended strangely with the clash and clamour of war in the streets.

Amongst the liberated was fat Ali Khan, the leader of the local Mohammedans. A carriage was brought for him, as he could not walk, and he was dragged to his home by the cheering Tartar population. On arrival at his house, he fell dead on the doorstep, the reaction having been so terrible.

Many other ex-prisoners were too weak to walk, many had suffered torture and were therefore incapacitated. I greeted Ischranian and Doctor Ter Mikalian, and it was then Ischranian's great friend told me how near I had been to a second imprisonment as a result of my conversation with the Kommissar of Justice.

The market square was full of ex-prisoners being issued with rifles and ammunition, which they put to good use the moment they reached the firing line.

The Parliament building, guarded by volunteers, was receiving a constant flow of Bolshevik prisoners, most of whom were young and not particularly desirous of fighting for the infliction of Soviet ideas on a strange people. They were a cheerful lot in spite of the fact that some of them were badly frightened by the suddenness of it all.

As I have mentioned before, one of the most striking things in the street fighting was the presence of so many Armenian snipers on the roofs. These did a considerable amount of good work in breaking up clumps of Russians and picking off the artillery-men, who had fixed an eighteen-pounder in the street and were preparing to blow us to pieces. It was due to

the snipers that the gun never fired, for at such a rate did they run from roof to roof that the wretched artillery-men were encircled in no time. Several Kommissars were captured in bed, and one at least paid the penalty for our seventy-five murdered in cold blood. He came hurtling through the air from his bedroom window, headless and naked, and his murderer was a brother-in-law of Hamazaspe.

The amount of loot the Kommissars had collected during their regime was indescribable. In one room we found about fifty pairs of boots of different kinds, jewellery, gold roubles, shirts, suits of European clothes and silver trinkets of Caucasian work.

As I had had a mackintosh taken by a Red soldier during the time I was in prison, I felt no qualms of conscience in appropriating a Russian military shirt, which I wore during the future months when shirts were few. I might have taken things of more worth, but by the time I had chosen my shirt there was little else left, since the room was full of Dashnakists. However, things were becoming too exciting for us to waste time in Kommissars' bedrooms, so we joined the clash and clamour of the fighting in the streets.

Everywhere the Bolsheviks were falling back, and their way of retreat lay towards the railway station. We did some good work in cutting off detachments from the main body, but we were too disorganised a command to foresee their reason for retiring on the station.

We were moving into the main street when suddenly we heard, coming down the hill from the north, the

clatter of horses' hoofs. We turned and saw something which did not fail to make the pulse beat quicker and the breast expand with pride.

It was some sixty peasants from Sassoun, mounted on their shaggy Caucasian ponies, standing in their stirrups, waving their "shashkas," and bearing at their head the Armenian national flag. Shouting "Haistan," they came towards us, and we cheered them again and again. It was a sign for the people to unearth their own flags, and the womenfolk dug in the earth and retrieved what they had buried in fear. From every house flew the flag once more. New life had come: the clouds had rolled away. At the head of this detachment of cavalry rode the Armenian leader, Sebo.

We embraced, we showed the direction of the battle, and apologising for being late, the cavalry moved towards the station.

On a bank overlooking the Arax the Bolsheviki had a machine-gun post of two machine-guns. Directly behind lay a boys' orphanage. During the forcing of the river, when the guns were firing continuously, four of the older orphans, aged from twelve to fifteen, rushed out with sticks and captured the machine-guns from the rear, whilst the crew fled for their lives. This was a very good instance, that all who have fought Russians know well, of how panics can be caused amongst them by an attack from the rear. This method of attack as well as movements at night or in mist I can confidently recommend as most effective against the Asiatic of Russian military training.

The excitement raised in the orphanage by this



stroke of luck caused many of the older orphans to leave their hostels and join the ranks of the invaders, where their mountain blood was given full chance of being cooled.

Gradually the fighting moved north-west and the town was cleared of the Reds. The hearts of the Armenians yearned for vengeance on Avis, the Kommissar for War, and the great Artarbekov. But Artarbekov was wise in his generation and had left when the invaders were nearing Erivan, thereby escaping vengeance for the tenth time at least. Unfortunately, there is little chance of ever bringing this man to book, since his eel-like elusiveness will probably end in suicide or complete insanity, which latter is either the beginning of Communism or the end. Chicherin spent two years in a mental asylum at Charlottenburg before the revolution, and I dread to think how many have become insane since the orgy of bloodshed began.

I must now tell of Charles Peers' behaviour during the fighting, for it serves to convey the type of man he proved to be.

He knew, as I did, of the plans for the rising, but was caught by surprise on the morning of the eighteenth.

Nevertheless, he was soon awakened by a hammering on his front door. Quickly he opened the back entrance, unfastened his bear and left him in the kitchen, then, bidding his wife take up the baby and stand out of range, he armed himself with four revolvers and opened the front door. Before him was a party of young and terrified Communists who



were looking for shelter under the American flag. Peers fired; I gather over their heads. They then rushed to the back, but the bear was too much for them and they fled down the street. Later, the bear was bedecked in the Armenian colours and kept guard in front, having received promotion. Peers then hoisted the Armenian flag by the side of the Stars and Stripes, and the balcony which served as the verandah of the Bolshevik offices upstairs was soon filled with Armenian snipers directed by Peers. It was from this balcony that I was nearly shot as I hastened to see what had become of my American friend. I looked too like a Russian and nearly suffered for it. Peers came and viewed the scene of massacre in the prison, and from then all impartiality vanished and he was for no quarter towards the Bolsheviks.

Doctor Ussher, on the other hand, regardless of bullets, went up and down the streets preventing the shooting of prisoners. It was entirely owing to his personality and eloquence that there was so little bloodshed in the town, and the self-control of those who captured Bolsheviks who were known for their terrorism was magnificent. One woman who had betrayed ten of her countrymen to the Bolsheviks was shot on the spot by her own brother, and a great many women Communists were arrested, but considering the provocation, the bloodshed was trivial in the extreme. Certainly there was not even an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, for there were not twenty killed in cold blood that day.

At last the sound of a field gun was heard and shells

began to fall over the town, bursting on the further eastern hill. The firing came from the station, and so Peers and I made our way thither as fast as we could, taking volunteers with us in our stride.

From the station building poured shot after shot, and from the edge of the town we replied. To the left and right flanks circled our cavalry from the Sassoun country. The gun that had been firing was from an armoured train just out of the station, whose engine showed signs of preparation for departure.

It appeared that Avis had given orders, in the event of defeat, to retire on the railway station, where an armoured train was in readiness stocked with ammunition and provisions. For two hours the battle waged, and gradually things were made too hot for those at the station. Realising this, they made a rush for the wagons, and at midday exactly the train pulled out and took the southern line.

So disorganised were we, that no movement to derail the train had been thought of before, and we were left furious and impotent, watching the enemy slip from our grasp. Within five minutes we had occupied the station buildings and had a party organised to take another engine and follow, but again we were beaten, for every engine had been smashed to pieces in all important parts and the stock of wood fuel had disappeared.

The cavalry and invading peasants started off in pursuit, whilst the regular battalion and the Erivan volunteers returned to the town.

The knowledge that the town was free made up, at any rate to a certain extent, for our disappointment at

seeing Avis and his followers escape from our hands, but from now onward every Armenian had one supreme desire, and that was to effect the capture of that young fiend who had ordered the massacre of the seventy-five.

Anyhow, from a military point of view, our attack on the station was wickedly inefficient, since, had we captured the train, the fighting that began next month and continued till April might not have occurred, though, of course, we should have been swamped sooner or later by Russian troops from Baku.

The joy of new-found freedom was rampant in the town, and casting care aside, we swelled the ranks of men and women singing the National Anthem and waving the dark blue, red and orange flag of Armenia.

Doctor Ussher with a beaming face moved around the town, followed by a surging mass of admirers, whilst Peers, with his baby on his arm and his bear bedecked in national colours at his side, smiled forth upon the world from Haskell House.

That evening volunteers left the town to join our forces who had followed the armoured train south, and the rest of us laughed and sang as though we had never known joy before.

Of the provisional government, the President was a Dashnak named Veratzian, an old revolutionary and a man of high principle, courage and resource.

The Governor of the Erivan Province had returned from hiding, also a general whose name I forget and a one-armed captain in Russian pre-revolution uniform. Also one or two other junior officers and

Lieut.-Colonel Beg Piroomov, one of the finest-looking soldiers I ever saw, who had escaped being taken to Baku with his brother officers, thanks to the cunning of a woman who loved him. Behind this particular story is a romance the like of which one would only expect to see in sensational fiction, but which it is out of my sphere to record.

During the morning of the day of liberty I had seen the sergeant-major and the privates of the Kemalist Military Mission apparently fighting on our side. I asked the reason and learnt that they were looking for a certain Bolshevik Kommissar who had been an officer in the Turkish army and was wanted for theft and desertion. They found him eventually, but I do not expect he lived long.

During the next days Dashnakists arrested several Communists in hiding, and these were taken direct to the civil prison.

On the nineteenth all the prisoners captured on the preceding day were marched from the Parliament building to the prison between lines of our cavalry, infantry and volunteers. Amongst the prisoners was Joseph Markossian, who had been arrested for his betrayal of me, and whose life, in the face of some opposition, I had spared. He was released a few days later on my request, as he was such a hopeless case and such a coward. He would probably have been better off if he had been shot, but there it was.

In between the batches of men and women marched under escort to the prison there came a lull. All eyes were on the door of the Parliament building. I was standing with Doctor Ussher and the Governor of

the Eriivan district on the steps. I turned, following the eyes of the people, and from the door issued the arch-murderer himself, a short, wizened, hunch-backed, bearded, bespectacled Jew. On either side walked an officer, revolver to his head: behind, two more officers holding their Mausers in a similar manner, and behind that the captain with the one arm, in his long blue Russian coat. In dead silence the little procession passed through the crowd towards the prison. Not a sound, a slight pulsation in the serried ranks of citizens, an almost inaudible hiss—that was all—and the officers' fingers curled lovingly round the triggers. Miserable sight as was this fiend who had hacked twenty-five living men to pieces with an axe, there was no feeling of pity, nor even a petition for his release, as would, no doubt, have happened in England. After all the prisoners had been removed Doctor Ussher and I returned home.

The following morning at breakfast we were disturbed by the band playing "Mir Hairanik" outside the house. Doctor Ussher went out on to the balcony, and below him was a crowd of cheering people. They had come to pay a compliment to the American who had stood by them in the dark days. Someone in the crowd asked for me, and so the two of us held a regal reception on the balcony. Doctor Ussher addressed them at length in Armenian and translated my speech to the crowd, which was that I was glad to see that Armenia had taken the Bolshevik war-cry to heart—"Proletariat of every country, unite."

About this time I translated two long telegrams, the



one into French and the other into English. The Russian message was wirelessly to Moscow, the English to Baghdad, and the French one to somewhere in Syria. In very flowery language the message told of the counter-revolution and the establishment of a provisional government. We had fully expected to find our one and only wireless smashed to pieces, but since the Kommissar of the wireless station knew nothing whatsoever about his job, he had tried to render the machine useless by cutting a few wires here and there and disconnecting others, therefore the mending was simple.

I never learnt whether our messages were ever received, though Moscow reported its receipt in the paper with terrible threats of vengeance.

Some three days after the massacre, the burial of the seventy-five took place. At the head of the vast procession the clergy; after them the band, the coffins, the relatives, troops, citizens and peasants. It was a unique procession, for it was the first time in the history of the Armenian Church that the coffin-lids were in place before the actual interment. The reason for this was obvious; a vast number of bodies were unidentifiable. Outside the Town Commandant's office the coffins were stacked, draped in the national flag, and as far down the street and in the square as the eye could see, the kneeling crowd begged their God to avenge. An old, white-bearded Socialist, who had known nearly as many prisons as he had summers, delivered the funeral oration, inveighing against the greatest tyranny the world had ever known, and finishing with an appeal to the people



never to let the Russians return to Erivan except they find it destitute of inhabitants.<sup>1</sup>

A deep murmur of agreement answered the old man.

Then on his knees he prayed for Armenia. He prayed for a chance for a people so often betrayed by geographical position, so often betrayed by the Great Powers. . . .

It was an impressive sight, and the sincerity of the speaker found ready answer in the stern endorsing faces of the kneelers.

The next days were spent in the reorganisation of the bread supply and the sending out of Dashnakists to receive news from the northern villages, where a simultaneous rising had also been effected, ordering any troops that might be loyal to Armenia to return to the capital. Military rule was abolished in Erivan and the curfew order lifted. Happy crowds of men and women now moved about and did their shopping without the aggravating knowledge that what they needed was reserved for the Kommissars or could not be bought without a permit.

The prisons by now were very full, and Doctor Ussher thought it would be a good thing to organise an extra-Armenia commission to inspect the cells and see whether as much comfort and cleanliness as was possible could be introduced amongst the prisoners.

Accordingly, with Veratzian's permission, a small party was formed, consisting of Doctor Ussher, the

<sup>1</sup> In April, when the Bolsheviks returned, they found but some 7 per cent. of the male population in Erivan (exclusive of Tartars), the rest having fled with the retreating army.

Persian Consul, Caffi, the Italian commercial agent, and myself. We inspected both prisons from top to bottom and found them infinitely preferable to what they had been under Bolshevik rule. As a result of our visit, lighting and sanitary arrangements were introduced into the women's cells and a doctor was told off to inspect prisoners once a day.

We had many complaints. One Bolshevik officer complained that he had been robbed of his ring, another that he had been roughly handled. Many of the young soldiery wept and swore that they would never have fought if they had not been forced to do so. Some soldiers wished to be released because they had fought for Koltchak or Deniken. The women protested because they had been marched into prison past the massacred bodies of the seventy-five. One told me that it was a pity I had not been killed as well. They were rather a terrible lot, these women Communists. . . .

Certainly some of the men were very shocked at the massacre and explained that they had no idea their party could do such things—the poor innocents.

One of the prisoners was only twelve years old, but he told us he did not wish to be released, as he was a Communist and only wished he had massacred the Menshevik himself. A horrid little child. A future Bronstein perhaps.

We did not talk to the little Jew who had murdered our comrades, but we looked through the grill of his cell and he smiled and showed his yellow teeth.

After our visit we wrote out a statement urging certain prison reforms and stating, with genuine truth,

how infinitely better tended were these prisoners than had been those of a few weeks before.

Shortly after this we tried to get into communication with Moscow in order to arrange an exchange of prisoners, since the loss of our fifteen hundred officers was being keenly felt throughout the whole country. Nothing came of our efforts, however, and we heard rumours of the despatch to Erivan of the Baku punishment brigade, which was Tartar cavalry, who by the nature of their atrocities generally subdued counter-revolutions within five minutes of their arrival.

When our provisional government had at last settled itself in office and all seemed peaceful once more except for the fighting far south of Erivan, Doctor Ussher and I arranged a little dinner-party to celebrate our new-found liberty. I forget the date of this, but I know it was a great fête day in the Armenian Church, during the evening of which people carry lighted candles and the men fire salvoes in the air whenever they feel like it.

I was returning to the house just before dinner, watching children relighting their candles which had been blown out by the wind, when I saw some of our cavalry galloping up the street, shouting in Armenian, and apparently hurrying along the small groups of candle-bearing worshippers. I did not pay much attention to this, imagining it to be part of the fête. I heard also a certain amount of firing, but put it down to the same cause. Our dinner was gay and music was to the fore. Speeches were made and healths drunk. Peers and his wife were there, and I think Shura and



RUBEN TER MINASSIAN  
Minister for War.

*[To face p. 120.]*



his mother and father, and Caffi, the Italian commercial representative.

The great point of discussion was whether Dilijan or Karaklis were still in the hands of the Bolsheviki or not, since news had been very difficult to get, and not even Veratzian knew the truth. Personally, I was only waiting to be certain before I left for Georgia.

We knew that the villages within a radius of thirty miles had all revolted with success on the eighteenth, but further afield we could only conjecture.

Our party broke up shortly after ten, and cheerfully we looked to further happy little dinners free from apprehension and danger.

It must have been about eleven o'clock, when Doctor Ussher and I were in the middle of a conversation, that a loud knock came at the door. We looked at each other and then the Doctor rose and left the room. I heard him speaking in Armenian, and then he ushered in a small dark man who had apparently been running for some distance. They spoke together for a few minutes and then the visitor left, having handed Doctor Ussher a letter.

This letter was from Veratzian, informing us there had been a panic amongst our troops south of Erivan, that the Russians were on the outskirts of the town and would probably enter Erivan before dawn. Could he therefore entrust his wife and child to Doctor Ussher's care? and if so the bearer of the letter would bring them round within the hour. He himself with all his followers would retreat over the hills to Persia.

The old black cloud came down on us like a pall. So that was what the firing had been, and this was



the end. We looked at each other and smiled. Caught again before we had had time to realise our short freedom. Now, at any rate, I thought, is the time to fly. I would find Veratzian and leave for Persia. Round I went at once to Peers to tell him the news. His language was amusing. We knew if we were caught there would be short shrift for us.

“Tell Doctor Ussher,” said Peers, “that a Russian bayonet would enjoy his portly figure better than most and he had better leave as well.” We decided that we would leave with the rest of the townspeople and meet at the first stopping-place in the mountains. I returned to Doctor Ussher’s.

Madame Veratzian and her little boy<sup>1</sup> had already arrived. She was in despair, poor woman, and terrified lest the Bolsheviki should exact punishment from her for her husband’s deeds. The little boy was tired, but too young to understand the danger which Doctor Ussher was running in harbouring his mother and his little self. We talked till midnight, but Madame Veratzian would not sleep; she lay on the sofa, her little boy in her arms.

We listened outside the window, but no sound of firing did we hear. It seemed to us like the lull before the final storm. I had decided not to go to bed, but to hold myself in readiness for the evacuation. Doctor Ussher refused to leave. His strength and faith were tremendous.

We sat down again and talked, and the silence outside made me obstinate. The Russians would not

<sup>1</sup> This poor little fellow died of exposure during the retreat to Persia in the following April.

dare attack at night. I would go to bed. Doctor Ussher turned in and I followed, falling rapidly into a dreamless sleep.

At six o'clock or thereabouts a loud knocking woke me up with a start. In the first seconds of returning consciousness I imagined the Bolshevik arrival. I went to the door and let in Ruben der Stepanian, one of the young doctors of the N.E.R., an Armenian with an American medical degree. He was armed to the teeth and carried a rifle. I took him to Doctor Ussher's room and then hurriedly dressed. Ruben had come to borrow one of the N.E.R. horses, and he and I therefore hastened off to the stables. He told me that the front lay some five miles from Erivan, since the Russians had fallen back in the night, imagining, I suppose, that we had retreated in order to draw them into the town for strategical reasons.

At the stables we saddled two greys and set off for Peers' house. We woke him up and told him the news. He promised to follow us shortly and we left for the front line.

At our general headquarters I met Veratzian, who seemed calmer than when last I had seen him. Further forward at advanced headquarters Ruben left me and went on to join the cavalry. Here I learnt that while Veratzian and his personal bodyguard were all that constituted general headquarters, operations were directed entirely from the wireless station, which was where I had arrived. We were pitiable short of officers, and Lieut.-Colonel Korotokharnov, a cavalry leader, was in command. Lieut.-Colonel Beg Piroomov was commanding in the support line, a

frontage of some six hundred yards, with five hundred infantry. At Korotokharnov's invitation I remained with him and discussed the situation.

Behind the enemy, on the railway line, lay the armoured train, which seemed to bear a charmed life. In front of this the Russians had about two battalions and a half of young troops, who were more or less entrenched in a series of posts with a depth of only fifty yards.

The great difficulty as far as our troops were concerned was that we could not rely on a single regular soldier from the Erivan district; not because they were disloyal, but because they possessed no fighting instinct whatsoever. Lack of training prevented co-ordination, and the Oriental conception of everything being "impossible" exasperated one to a frenzy of foaming inaction.

The retreat on to Erivan had been caused by a panic amongst our troops resulting from the opening of machine-gun fire from our support line.

The armoured train seemed to be short of shrapnel, for she only kept up spasmodic bursts of rifle fire.

It seemed to me that the best way of demoralising the enemy was to rush up a field gun and fire on the train with open sights. This I urged on Korotokharnov, but he was too near the town to risk a panic, and too good a cavalry soldier to let the artillery give the *coup de grâce* when he still hoped to capture the train by a cavalry movement at night.

During the night following, our cavalry attempted this, but were beaten back, though, as compensation, about fifty Bolsheviks deserted to us and were

imprisoned for their pains, since we knew our enemy's propaganda tricks too well.

The little difference between Korotokharnov and myself over the use of artillery led to my non-appearance the following day, though Peers and I rode up to the station and were amazed to find the armoured train firing H.E. in a vain endeavour to hit G.H.Q.

The Turkish consul drove up to watch the proceedings and seemed to think he could capture the train with a couple of "mehmeds."<sup>1</sup>

The position was unsatisfactory, though it appeared from deserters' reports that the enemy did not dare enter the town, since they were uncertain of our strength and had looked on our retreat as strategical.

The day was uneventful and it was decided to attack the following morning. That evening I had dinner with Peers and his wife, and I am afraid we found great solace for our tiredness and anxiety in too many glasses of Erivan cognac, which before the revolution was famed throughout all Russia. The result of this was that on our way back to the front we decided on a race. My horse was Caucasian, his English. Shouting words of encouragement we passed the support line. Careless of our destination we passed the front line. Heedless of the bright moonlight we galloped through our last outposts, until a sharp rattle of machine-gun fire brought us to our senses. We dismounted behind a low wall and looked around. We were amongst the enemy's posts and were an easy target for their fire. Once more we mounted, and

<sup>1</sup> Turkish private soldiers. Cf. Tommy Atkins

waving our "papachs" in the air, we galloped back through our lines and never drew rein till we reached headquarters. We were both untouched and still laughing. Later on we realised what follies one can commit on Erivan cognac, and yet we were satisfied that our artificial sang-froid had put heart into our strange assortment of troops.

As regards our troops, we were constantly receiving reinforcements such as old men, young girls, boys from the orphanages and women who had lost their male relatives in the massacre.

Every night deserters came across, but we were wary and imprisoned them all instead of attaching them to our troops, which was what the Bolsheviki hoped.

I went to see Korotokharnov as soon as Peers and I were recovered from our race, and made my peace with him.

He and I then went out to arrange the details of the attack, being well able to do so owing to the brilliancy of the moon.

On my way to the town in the very early hours of the morning I noticed slight activity in the distance, and was just able to stop one of our machine-guns from opening fire, since I knew it to be our cavalry manœuvring for position.

Three hours' sleep, and then Peers and I returned at dawn. The battle-field was very silent, but our hopes were high, and although we knew we were playing a losing game, we firmly expected to clear Erivan for the time being and drive the enemy back along the railway line and cut the road which might



bring them help if their reinforcements from Baku intended joining forces with them.

Shortly after dawn our cavalry charged from both flanks and crossed. Immediately we saw our horsemen reappear, the infantry advanced. The first wave was composed of the peasant members of the Dashnak-zutoun who had caused the counter-revolution, and they were followed by a strange assembly of the sexes, whose enthusiasm rose and fell with the intensity of the fire.

The armoured train, which had taken pains to protect its retreat, steamed slowly away and the retreat commenced. The Bolsheviki seemed in a hurry, and by the afternoon the battle line had moved some ten miles south of Erivan, and the townspeople breathed again.

Korotokharnov followed up with his staff, and I returned to the capital in order to get news of the happenings in the other parts of the country and find out if it were possible to make for Georgia and get away before the Baku contingent arrived. For I was full of a great fear, and had no doubt as to my fate should I fall once more into the hands of the Liberators of Mankind.

I found that a number of Russian prisoners had just arrived, escorted by a party of Armenians belonging to the forces of Lieut.-Colonel Nidjdé, who had been holding our eastern front in Karabagh for the past six months. He had sent a message that, provided the hills were passable, he would bring reinforcements himself for the Erivan sector, as the pressure on his front had been gradually lessened owing to revolts in



Eastern Azerbaijan. The news from the Georgian frontier was conflicting, some saying the Bolsheviki had been driven out, others that they were still in control. Anyway, that exit seemed to be too dangerous to attempt.

We had received no reply to our wireless to Moscow urging an exchange of prisoners, and their silence warned us of the revenge they would exact when they retook Erivan. The town on the whole was fairly cheerful; a cloud had been lifted from them by the retreat of the Bolsheviki.

The knowledge that we were simply awaiting the inevitable defeat was not as depressing as one might suppose, since the wave of freedom was still high and we were accustomed to being grateful for the present, which had proved such a relief from the past.

Personally I was beginning to feel like a rat in a trap running from side to side, unable to find a way out; and yet I felt that a way had to be found, more especially as friends were in the habit of saying cheerfully, "You'd better not let the Bolsheviki find you here when they return," or "God knows what delightful torture awaits you if you are caught."

Doctor Ussher was also constantly urging flight while it was possible, though he never let it worry him when I replied with a *tu quoque*.

Rumours were going about of Communist activity in the town, and Veratzian therefore ordered a general round-up of all Russians and others suspected of Communist sympathies.

For the next day or two the town was transformed

into a man-hunting arena, in which many arrests were made and a few killed.

I remember hearing pistol shots in a back street and seeing a Russian running in and out of houses and round corners, followed by a party of Dashnakists. As he made off down a side street, a fat, frock-coated man with an umbrella rushed out of his house and tripped him up with the handle, promptly sitting on him till his pursuers came up.

One house concealed six Communists and it took twenty armed men to surround it, since there were so many doors through which they might escape. Three men were found inside, one was caught in the garden and another climbing the wall. The sixth was on the roof and was eventually brought down by a woman, who fired at him from her own roof about a hundred yards away. Another Russian was caught in the street and was being badly man-handled, when a Russian woman pushed her way through the crowd, took him by the arm and escorted him away under the very noses of his persecutors, who were taken completely aback by her courage and personality. He was arrested later, though, and proved to be a Kommissar of some kind or another who was genuinely trying to leave Bolshevism and escape to a civilised country. I understand that he was allowed to join our forces, and was killed during the April retreat to Persia, fighting on our side.

One Bolshevik was found dead in the church with a large gilded cross lying close beside him, which had fallen from high up and apparently killed him then and there.

This was taken as an omen and did much to cheer the peasants.

And so three or four days passed, and still the fighting continued in the south, and no news came from the north.

The snow was lying thickly on the hills and the tracks were impassable in many places, save where the villagers had cut paths from one hamlet to another, and there the drifts were five feet deep.

Ox-carts left Erivan daily with bread for our troops, but they found the going difficult and Armenians began to drift back to Erivan : not as deserters, though, but simply to have one good meal, after which they returned.

About the 26th of February, in the evening, the town was heavily shelled and we learnt there had been a panic amongst our troops, and that the Bolsheviks, bringing supports from their posts on the Persian frontier, were now within a mile of the town.

Up we all went. This was apparently to be the last phase. Volunteers were called for and the answer was amazing. Veratzian urged the people forward and our line was strengthened a hundred-fold. The cause of the panic had been the arrival of the Bolshevik reinforcements on our flank, added to the deprivations of the past fortnight and the hopelessness of our cause.

Gallant deeds were done by the Dashnakists in acting as a rear-guard to our paralysed forces, and it was only when Veratzian came up with the rest of us that the panic subsided.

Peers and I, minus the cognac this time, did our best to quieten our troops by riding up and down the

lines, although, personally, I was far too terrified of being hit by machine-gun fire to make an impressive and upright figure.

I remember Lieut.-Colonel Beg Piroomov riding by his men, his magnificent figure sitting his horse like a statue, and followed by the woman who never left him, seated side-saddle on a jet-black horse, a rifle slung around her and her beautiful eyes never leaving the man she loved. We passed and saluted each other, and my little bodyguard cheered the woman, for they loved romance in war as all soldiers do. Thus heartened, we remained for a day and night in a position of stalemate, and Peers and I slept on the station platform for an hour or so.

The next morning Korotokharnov decided that we could not expect to drive the enemy away unless Ruben Pasha could send us some more mountaineers from Zanguezur as he had promised.

We therefore spent the early dawn and following evening in reconnoitring and keeping up periodical fire during the day-time. Shura Khansorian came to the fore as a scout, wandering in and out of the enemy line and even conversing with any young soldier he found in a lonely post. He learnt that the enemy would not attempt to enter the town until the Baku contingent arrived; that they had not suffered from lack of food, since the armoured train had been well stocked, but that their morale was weak and that they were tired of going into other people's countries and wanted to go home. Several Kommissars had been shot by their own men and many desertions had taken place.

All this information we had suspected, but were glad to find it confirmed, and our fears of a further push were assuaged.

Our cavalry were indefatigable and, working on their own, added greatly to the loss of the enemy morale, since unexpected charges from both flanks were very disconcerting to an enemy that could not retaliate.

They replied, however, by shell fire on the town; as a result of which several people were killed.

This fire succeeded in arousing the fury of those who had not taken any part in the fighting up to the present, and we witnessed the strange sight of aged tailors, butchers, and candlestick-makers closing their shops at six in the evening, spending the night in the trenches and returning in the morning ready to resume their trade. Should the town receive an extra ration of shelling in the afternoon, early closing came voluntarily into force and our line was increased until the next morning.

The position was hourly becoming more untenable, and when rumours came through from the north-east that Bolshevik troops were moving towards Erivan, our despair began to become apparent.

Reinforcements arrived for us in the morning of the twenty-eighth at the same time as definite information as to the proximity of the Bolshevik troops from Baku reached us.

We had been outnumbered by about five to one all the time, but now they would have ten times more than us.

In conversation with the Kemalist representative



I had expressed a desire to escape from this cul-de-sac, and Behaddin Bey had suggested my passing through Turkey. He also told me relations between Turkey and England were very good.

The question for me to settle was whether it would be better for me to retreat with the army into Persia and make my way to Mosul or Baghdad, or to take a short cut across Turkey and make for Constantinople. Doctor Ussher wished me to make for Persia at once. Peers and I thought Turkey the best way. In any case I had decided to go, my nerves were bad and my dread of recapture by the Bolsheviki overwhelmed me.

Korotokharnov had decided that the moment the attack started in earnest he would pass through the town, taking all the males with him, and fight a rear-guard action to Djulfa. I imagined it would simply be a matter of days before the retreat started, and therefore any qualms of conscience I had about deserting the Armenians were laid to rest.

This was another important decision for me, and I chose the quickest way, proving later that the shortest way home is often the longest way round.

I received an Armenian passport from Veratzian, which Behaddin Bey viséd for me and an interpreter. Unfortunately I could not read Turkish, and the Kemalist Consul had been so charming to me that I saw no reason to distrust him. I did not know the Turk as yet.

I told Shura Khansorian to be ready at Peers' house the following evening, March the 1st, with my horse, and I spent my last night with Doctor Ussher.



As regards Peers, he had so much of a family that he was not able to make up his mind when he would leave, though it was clear to him he could not remain should the Bolsheviki return.

I urged Doctor Ussher to leave with me on the morrow, but he refused.

On the morning of the 1st of March, which was my birthday, and therefore, I thought, propitious, I made my bundle and took it round to Peers', where he had arranged my farewell and birthday lunch.

Just before I left, a meeting of the relatives of the massacred seventy-five was held to decide on the fate of the murderer, and after much discussion it was determined to burn him alive by saturating his clothes in petrol in the same room as he had committed his atrocity.

My birthday lunch finished, Doctor Ussher gave me a bag of letters for the N.E.R. representatives at Alexandropol, also an introduction, saying I had been employed as a N.E.R. worker in Erivan. I also took with me two photographs of the massacre showing the dead bodies.<sup>1</sup>

Doctor Ussher, M. Caffi and I drove off in a carriage, while Shura, leading my horse, rode behind.

We had not gone far before Shura's horse cast a shoe and we had to wait for a new one. If only I had been superstitious I should have turned back, since

<sup>1</sup> I have acceded to my publishers' request that these two photographs of massacred Armenians, the inclusion of which I had contemplated as ocular proof of the authenticity of my statements, be omitted as unsuited for publication in a book issued for general circulation.

casting a shoe before a journey is always an evil omen. Alas, I was too material. . . .

Outside the town we halted and, saying good-bye to my two good friends, I mounted my horse. Doctor Ussher said later he had a strange feeling of impending disaster as we moved off. I was unconscious of it, so glad was I to be away from Erivan and the booming guns.

Shura and I moved off over the snow to Ashtarak on our eventful journey which was to lead to such sorrow and danger.

## CHAPTER VII

ASHTARAK lies but a short distance from Erivan, so we did not hurry as we passed over the hills. The snow was not very deep, as the daily traffic had cut a way and trampled it down in all directions.

The way was barren of trees and dreary in the extreme, except for the sense of freedom and space that all wide expanses of the same colour give one. We passed a few ox-carts and two bands of armed peasants moving towards the capital, full of keenness and excitement. As the darkness came down upon us we mounted a hill and saw the village below, opposite and above us, rising from the silver river shaded with alders up the side of a steep cliff. The village was full of fruit trees and the snow on the rocks gleamed pink in the dying sunlight.

Down the near slope then, and over the bridge; up a winding road cut between the rocks to the summit, and all the while the tinkling sound of the river and the swaying of the alders. . . .

We intended to spend the night with Shura's grandmother, who lived here, and so we made our way thither.

A charming old lady she was, and with her stayed her son, a doctor and ardent Dashnakist, and her daughter.

We had a most excellent meal of fruit and plov, and

told them of our adventures in Erivan. In Ashtarak the counter-revolution had resulted in the killing of the head of the Soviet and the imprisonment of the other officials. There had been no opposition, and the villagers had now resumed control.

We were astir early, as we wished to push on and reach Norachen before the relieving Bolsheviki had crossed our route on their way to Erivan.

We went round to the military commandant's office to ask for a guide, and found that the captain himself with a Dashnak spy were about to leave for Bashabaran. We joined forces and our little band of four started forth over the snow-clad mountains, climbing, ever climbing, for we were at the beginning of the long range of hills that runs northwards to the plain of Alexandropol and holds the glory of Mount Alageuze in the base of one of its extended fingers.

Ashtarak lay behind us, peaceful and beautiful, like a wintry mountainous edition of Aranjuez in Spain.

Our new companions were opposite extremes : the captain serious and remote, the spy alert, humorous and full of interest. His job had been crossing the Turkish lines and getting information, and he was now on his way to learn how the counter-revolution had gone in the north.

As we rode, the snow became deeper and the track invisible, whilst the sun beat down unmercifully and threw up a glare from the whiteness around that dazzled and dazed me.

The going became slower and slower till the snow was up to my horse's withers.

The horse, however, was Caucasian bred and he pounded his way along, placing his feet with a high-stepping firm movement that showed me he was used to it all.

In some places I walked, and the snow came up to my waist, so that I gave it up after a time and mounted afresh.

Often we stumbled across a hard beaten track under some two feet of snow, but we never managed to hold to it for long.

And all the while we could still hear the guns echoing through the hills, and the sound urged me forward, since it reminded me that on our right the relief force from Baku was moving towards us, though, unless they had flankers on the hills, we should not expect to meet Bolsheviki in the mountains.

About midday, after floundering along in the snow for many miles, we came on a road cut in the snow with banks four feet high, and advancing thereon came a battery of field-gunners.

They were shouting for vengeance on Avis and seemed in a great hurry to reach Erivan. As there was only room for them on the road we had to go into the snow, which luckily my horse did not mind, but my three companions had great difficulty in doing this and had to dismount and drag their horses off the road to make way.

We passed one or two little hamlets tucked away amongst the snow and rocks, and I longed for peace so that I could make this journey in summer, when, I imagined, the beauty would be so great and the snow would have gone.

At one of these villages we halted for a meal, and the inhabitants came out from the snow and asked eagerly for news. Amongst the inquirers was a captain of infantry who had been in hiding from the Bolsheviki. To his house we went and were given a meal of bread, mutton, goat's cheese and wine.

The house was half buried by the snow, so that the windows were blocked up and a soft diffused light showed the room wherein we sat. There was a bed and table, two benches and a sideboard on which were many maps and geometrical instruments. On the walls hung rifles and swords. When we told him of the massacre, he ordered his horse to be brought round, and as we moved on north, he left for Ash-tarak, intending to reach Erivan in time to take his revenge.

On we moved, with the snow varying in depth and the hot sun striking the snow with amazing brilliance.

Sometimes our pace was slow and plodding; at other times we trotted on a ridge whence the snow had been cleared for the passing of wagons.

By this time my eyes began to hurt me and I rode with my "papach" well over my eyes; yet each step brought more pain and I could scarcely open the lids. The darkness came on apace and my companions urged on their horses, for we still had several miles to cover and we did not wish to meet with the wolves which infested the hills at night.

At length we passed a sentry post and knew we were close to Bashabaran, but from thence to the village we hurried fast, for on both flanks we saw the circling



grey bodies and heard the howl of the wolf searching for food. Revolvers in hand we did the last two miles as fast as possible, but, by this time, I could barely see the outline of my spy friend who rode in front of me, though the darkness was by no means intense and the glow from the snow made the countryside visible to ordinary eyes for many yards.

We reined up outside the company headquarters and, climbing a ladder, entered a room lit by an oil lamp. For some time I could make nothing out and I realised I was snow-blind. After a time I discerned a bed and table and a group of officers and men. A certain amount of telephoning was done, in which the first regiment of regular cavalry at the next village was ordered to Erivan at once. I was given soup and cheese to eat, and lying down on the bed was soon asleep, and the pain in my eyes left me for the night.

When I awoke, Shura told me our two companions had left and that we could start on as soon as I liked. I stumbled down the ladder into the light, hoping that my sight would be better, but, although I made out a party of soldiers being inspected in front of the building, I knew I was still bad, for I could not keep my eyes open. The more I rubbed them, the worse they became, so I held two handfuls of snow to them and told Shura to bring my horse. I thanked the captain of the detachment for his hospitality and rode out of the village, Shura leading my horse, for I could not see the way.

About two miles out the snow became very deep, and I was forced to dismount and walk on, holding my horse's tail for direction.

Shura's patience and kindness were extraordinary, for I was a helpless creature and in a very bad temper. At a little village on the way I was given an old pair of smoked glasses, but they were worse than useless and I threw them from me in a rage.

This day was agony in the extreme and I shall never forget it as long as I live. Riding, walking, trotting, jolting, furious with my helplessness, completely sightless, I was the worst of companions, and I knew, the whole time, what glorious country I was traversing and was furious because I could not see.

Mounting a high slope we heard the guns again, and I stupidly accused Shura of leading me the wrong way.

In the afternoon the sun began to worry Shura, but he swore that black eyes were stronger than blue and that he would not be incapacitated. As the evening came on, I heard the wolves again, and I childishly urged Shura to leave me to them and make for Georgia if he could. We hurried on and the howls came nearer. I asked their whereabouts many times, but the answer was always the same: that they were a long way off. Later Shura told me that a couple of them had come quite close. . . .

At last we reached Norachen, the last inhabited village from the Turkish outposts.

We were met by the head-man of the village, who was most hospitable. He bathed my eyes in vodka and gave me a white bowl of still snow water to gaze into, which relieved the pain considerably, so that I could dimly make out my surroundings.

I was lying on a long bench in a low barn, opposite which was another crowded with villagers. On the left of my head a small charcoal fire, and between the fixed benches a long table. On either side of the benches behind a four-foot wooden partition were the cattle that belonged to the village, which were kept there till the snows cleared. The barn was warm and the smell of cattle and hay pleasing to the senses. The snow completely covered the building except for the doorway, outside which a way had been dug out. In this building all the villagers assembled at night, and most of the men slept on the benches, which were some twenty feet long.

Here I ate mutton and goat-cheese and drank vodka, whilst Shura recounted our adventures and told them who I was.

The villagers were most hospitable and offered to show us their local Soviet, who were imprisoned. I was not particularly keen to do so, especially since the head of this Soviet was a diseased beggar who used to peddle goods between the villages before the revolution.

I slept well in the warm hay-filled atmosphere and mingled the consistent cud-chewing of the cows with my early dreams.

When I awoke my eyes were still bad, and I was thankful that to-day we should cross the Turkish lines and perhaps meet a doctor with the necessary eyelotion. A guide was forthcoming and he led my horse for me for about four miles. Here we found a deserted half-burnt village, grim relic of the Turkish advance in 1918. Our guide pointed ahead and

showed us the direction of the Turkish outposts, but refused to go on any further, as it was not considered safe owing to the roving habits of individual "mehmeds."

We were on a high plateau, very rocky, with not much snow on the ground, and the absence of massed white relieved my eyes somewhat. I bade Shura give his rifle to the guide to take back to the village, and we then proceeded, unarmed except for a Mauser I had in my coat pocket.

We continued on our way for some two miles and eventually Shura sighted the Turkish outposts. I took out my passport and held it in the air so that its white colour would show we were on a peaceful errand. Three soldiers advanced to meet us and I presented them with the document. One went back to fetch a sergeant who could read, and he asked us in Russian what our business was. We told them we were come from the N.E.R. bound for Alexandropol, whence we hoped to make for Batoum and thereby finally escape the Bolsheviks. We were told to dismount, and we waited some time whilst they telephoned to their battalion headquarters for instructions.

I began to feel safer now that we were behind the lines of an enemy of Bolshevism, only I was slightly apprehensive of whether I could pass Shura off as a Russian or not.

The sergeant soon returned, and we were led to a village about a mile from the outpost and conducted into a room filled with men. This room I could not see clearly, but after a few minutes made out some wall-carpets, and three or four officers sitting at a

table. The O.C. asked me if my eyes were bad, and on receipt of an emphatic affirmative he sent for the doctor. The doctor injected a zinc or copper lotion in my eyes, which gave me instant relief.

The day before I had realised that on both sides of my face I had large sores which hurt considerably when I spoke. I asked the doctor what this was and he told me frost-bite.

The O.C. was most charming and ordered coffee and cigarettes for us, and introduced me to an English-speaking officer who had been a prisoner of war in Mesopotamia.

He questioned me as to my reason for being in Armenia, and I told him I was travelling and now wished to make for the coast and return to Constantinople. I related what the Bolsheviki had done and how they had blocked the way of escape. Shura, I told him, was my friend and a Russian subject who was fleeing from the terror.

A certain amount of telephoning then took place, and I was told I could go on to Alexandropol and an officer would be provided as a guide. Shura and I were then given a meal with the English-speaking officer. My bag of N.E.R. letters I offered to the O.C., but he did not want to see them, which, as it turned out, was a stroke of good fortune.

A most excellent meal of "ragout," bread and honey followed, and my host spoke enthusiastically of his treatment by the English; which was good hearing.

It was late in the afternoon when we were summoned once more to headquarters, and then, bidding good-bye



ALEXANDER GREGORIEVITCH KHANSORIAN  
Taken in Rustov, 1916, in his school uniform.

[To face p. 144.]





to the assembled officers, we turned our horses to the setting sun and trotted down the slope, heading for the great plain of Alexandropol.

It was a wonderful ride, and my healed eyes took in the beauty of the sun-streaked plain and rose to see the summit of Mount Alagöz, blushing with a soft pink colour tingeing the whiteness of her face.

There are two distinct mountains on the western side of Armenia—Ararat and Alagöz, but for colouring alone the latter is by far the most impressive, since her contours are so perfectly formed and her slender neck widens till it reaches the plain, where the shoulders take shape and stretch away into the beginning of sight.

My first clear view of wolves came to me in the plain, and I saw them hugging the mountain and running out towards us and then retreating, uncertain. At one place my horse stumbled badly, and, on looking down, I saw half buried in the snow the body of a woman and baby, and I knew they would lie till the wolves tugged them out and left but the skeletons to show the fate of refugees from Turkish invasions.

It was growing very dark by the time we saw the station silhouetted against the purple sky, and we hastened on and did not cease our speed till we drew rein at the Alexandropol brigade headquarters. Here we were apparently expected, and after our guide had been inside for some minutes we were ushered into the presence of Osman Bey. He asked many questions, and when I inquired whether I could not leave to-morrow for Batoum, he answered that the road was

impassable and that I had better leave for Erzeroum and thence to Trebizond. I only realised later that the Turkish troops were marching on Batoum, and were shortly to hold the town for strategical purposes should the Bolsheviki take Georgia and become troublesome. I again offered the letters to Osman Bey and gave him my British passport. The former he refused, and acceded to my request to spend the night at the N.E.R. hostel. He asked many questions about the Bolsheviki and told me he would send for me again. I learnt that there was no telephonic communication with Erivan, and therefore I hoped that they would not find out too much of my pre-revolutionary activities.

I was then given a guide to the N.E.R. hostel and left in the darkness for a half-mile ride.

At the steps of the house our guide left us, and handing my reins to Shura, I walked in with my bag of letters. I do not recall what I said, but Clark Martin reminded me a year ago that my entry was accompanied by a shower of snow and the words: "A messenger from Erivan, and thank the Lord I've got here."

The hospitality and welcome we received were delightful. Our hosts were Martin Brown and Clark Martin, two charming Americans who had done N.E.R. work in Salonica, Roumania, Georgia and here. With them were one or two Armenian clerks and interpreters.

They stabled our horses and regaled us with stories, questions and food. I must have been a repulsive sight with my eyes still fairly sore and my face frost-

bitten, with a gradually thawing beard dropping rain on to the floor; however, they were full of kindness and the house was warm and hung with carpets, and Americani, so what more could one desire? I conceived on the spot a great liking for American tinned cereals, of which the meal was chiefly composed.

After our meal Brown suggested that the interpreter should read the letters that were addressed to individual Armenians in Alexandropol, since they would all have to be delivered to the Turkish censors sooner or later. This they did, and we spent an hour in tearing up and burning the vast majority of the letters, since they contained nothing but deprecations of the Bolsheviki, and more especially the Turks. Then it was I blessed the fate that had left the letters hitherto unread.

So we talked and they read Dr. Ussher's letter of introduction, and we spoke of the betrayal of Armenia and the greater tragedy that is to come before the Near East settles to a life of peace. In the middle of our conversation a great character entered. He was a Turkish private soldier attached to the commissariat; a man of infinite use, for he dealt with the N.E.R. in army blankets and they received sheep in exchange.

He was a great philosopher, this man, fat, flushed and voluble. He had been a soldier all his life and knew more about Man than many wider travelled. He knew that I was an Englishman at once and told Shura he was an Armenian. Nothing we could say would alter his last conviction, and I felt nervous lest his understanding should cause us trouble.

He told us tales in broken Russian, English and Turkish mixed, and laughed long and oft over the kindness of the Allies in letting them regain more territory in the Caucasus than they had before the war. He prophesied more war, and swore he would live to see the Turkish flag over Constantinople and Baghdad once more.

He has seen Constantinople once more in Turkish hands by now, if he is alive, and will probably not be disappointed about Baghdad.

He left late, and Shura and I retired to bed and to the feel of clean sheets after some days of their absence. We had a fire going most of the night and pyjamas were supplied.

We slept late and awoke to find a message from Osman Bey telling me to bring round the letters during the morning.

There was a bright sun and a cold wind sweeping over the plain, as apparently there always is, but the beauty of the vast white space with Alagöz looking whiter still in the sky is unforgettable.

Yet what misery has Alagöz seen for the people of her land!

With the letter-bag in my hand I went round to headquarters. Here Osman Bey questioned me as to my services in the 1914-1918 war, and seemed doubtful when I told him I had not fought in Mesopotamia. I asked when I would leave for Erzeroum, and he told me he was finding out if the road was clear.

He glanced casually at the letters in the bag, but made no comment. Further questions about the

Bolsheviki military machine and then I returned to the N.E.R.

That afternoon I met a delightful American doctor named Mayne, who was busy trying to check the spread of "trachoma" amongst the N.E.R. workers. With him I went round the hospitals. Hundreds and hundreds of Armenian orphans were being cared for here, and the strange diseases they suffered from beggar description. It suffices to say that every disease that starvation, exposure, dirt and fatigue can cause was found amongst the patients. Alopecia, anæmia, cankers, many forms of ringworm, œdema, ophthalmia, consumption, catalepsy, pleurisy, rickets, cataract, erysipelas, chlorosia, worms : all were present, and sometimes a mixture of many, and at other times a disease that baffled. Against these diseases Dr. Mayne consistently fought.

The attitude of the Turks, who, of course, were responsible for the whole tragedy, was one of contemptuous toleration, and only the presence of the N.E.R. saved a massacre of all the children, which would have resulted in Turkey saying to the world : "There is no reason to give back Alexandropol to the Armenians : it is a Turkish town. Besides, there are no Armenians in Alexandropol."

This, of course, is the usual Turkish method of procedure.

The orphans in Alexandropol were nearly all in hospital, and the sight of so many in pain made one wonder whether it would not be more merciful to let them die now than to live through such an uncertain future as that which attends local Armenians.



The dormitories seemed endless and the children were often two in a bed.

I returned thence to the compound and saw the other buildings: the surgery and the laboratories; all perfectly organised and well equipped by the generosity of Americans from the United States. And yet there should have been no need for this vast private enterprise if only the Allies had kept their promises and settled an enduring state in a wider Armenia.

The next day I was driven into the town in a victoria and was able to see Alexandropol as she was left after the sacking. The N.E.R. buildings were by the railway line, about two versts from the main part of the town and slightly above it in height.

Alexandropol is a typical Russian town swept by icy-cold winds, bleak, gaunt, square—relieved at intervals by the cupola domes of Russian churches and the higher roofs of the former private banks.

The streets were dirty, the town almost empty of inhabitants. Here and there an aged Armenian tailored for the Turkish soldiery or baked Turkish cakes or cobbled shoes, but the rest of the population were scattered, massacred, or living in caves by the side of Alagöz, waiting for death. The silence of the town was enhanced by the snow in the streets, and our rumbling wheels were the only sounds, except for the soft patter of a Turkish soldier's feet on the pavement.

The selling of blankets carried out by the N.E.R. in exchange for sheep had certainly transformed the Turkish soldiery, for in the place of ragged military

uniforms or civilian clothes were now neatly-fitting khaki jackets of American blanket cloth. In footwear alone did the soldiers fall short, and for the most part they wore untanned cow-hide shaped like a bedroom-slipper and tied across the top of the instep by straw or string.

The day passed quietly, and in the evening a Mr. White and his wife arrived from Kars. He was an ex-missionary and one of the superintendents of the N.E.R. A nervous little man and a fluent Turkish and Armenian speaker, his experience of the Turks had given him a wholesome fear of their capabilities. When he had heard my story he showed a faint apprehension, since he considered that Osman Bey might take me for a spy and wreak vengeance on the N.E.R. for harbouring me. During the evening a strangely dressed Englishman called and was given food. I spoke to him shortly and he appeared to be very nervous, since he was in hiding, and was awaiting a chance to escape. He did not stay long, and apart from the fact that he had come from Erzeroum, I had not time to learn more of him, except that he was one of Colonel Rawlinson's A.S.C. drivers.

We sat up late that night and discussed the past and future with mutual interest. Brown and Martin showed me some photographs they had taken of massacred Armenians in the rivers, half covered in snow, which gave the lie to the Turkish statement that no massacres had taken place during the last invasion of Armenia.

I wondered how many more women and children the snow was hiding, and whether there would be any

retribution exacted by the Western upholders of Christianity and humanity—which nouns in clerical circles are not invariably synonymous.

The Treaty of Lausanne we did not foresee. . . .

Brown had read those most famous of all tragic memoirs, "*Les memoirs d'une déportée Arménienne*," by Madame Captanian, and reminded us of the naked Armenian youth who was found reciting Racine in the high-pitched voice of a madman, and by hurling himself into the river escaped the massacre.

He told us of how an Armenian translation of Homer was discovered half completed in the ruins of Erzeroum, and how one of the greatest architects of the day, Touromanian,<sup>1</sup> lost the whole of an unpublished manuscript on architecture in the taking of Kars.

From Brown and Martin we heard the story of the fall of Kars, and how the N.E.R. women stayed at their posts in the great valley and stopped the panic that would have led to a worse disaster.

One paragraph in Madame Captanian's book had received confirmation by a similar act committed but a few days before, just outside the town, on an orphan who was still in hospital; and this I may well quote as showing an attendant evil to the massacre of Armenians :

"Nous étions arrivés au sommet d'une montagne. Le chef de l'escorte avait remarqué dans la caravane une jeune fille et il la désira. Elle résistait. Là-dessus il se présente, entouré d'une bande de Kurdes

<sup>1</sup> I may have quoted the wrong name here.

armés, et nous dit : ' Vous allez tout de suite me livrer une telle, sinon, je vous fais toutes massacrer.' . . . Visiblement le salut de la caravane était à ce prix. Nous nous jetons aux pieds de la jeune femme pour la supplier de consentir à ce qu'on lui demandait. Elle se taisait, pleurait, le visage caché dans ses mains. Enfin, elle se rendit à nos instances. Elle me pria seulement de l'accompagner, car elle n'osait aller seule. . . . Elle revenait le lendemain. . . . Puis elle disparut vers le soir. Elle était allée probablement se jeter dans la rivière que nous venions de traverser."

And as retribution Great Britain signed the Treaty of Lausanne. . . .

Many thoughts prevented sleep for some time, and the morrow showed the beginning of another stage of my journey. It was March the 9th.

Shortly after breakfast I was bidden to make up my baggage and go to the station with Shura and the guide who brought me my orders.

I said good-bye to the N.E.R. workers and they wished me success in my journey to Constantinople. White told me to ask the N.E.R. at Kars for anything I might need. Near the station we were side-tracked into a room hung with Russian maps where an officer sat at a table. He greeted me in French and asked many questions about the Bolsheviki, all of which I answered to the best of my ability. We spoke of Constantinople, where his family lived, and I offered to tell his people how he was faring. He gave me his address and told me I must now go to the train.

Arrived again at the station an officer told me to

enter a goods truck, which I did, followed by Shura. Two armed soldiers arrived and entered the truck with us, closing the doors behind, A small slot was the only light. Four or five Turks were seated on their baggage and then the train drew out of the station. I wondered rather at this method of departure and at the two sentries, but, on being questioned, they told us it was for our safety, which we believed, though not without other thoughts. The country moved past, clothed in its white mantle. Little ruined hamlets, frozen streamlets, solitary horsemen. No trees, no relief of colour save the steady blue sky and the impotent sun.

The soldiers gave us a cup of coffee and the merchant Turks with their carpeted baggage were friendly and inquisitive.

Shura began to wonder whether we should ever see Constantinople, and I was worried lest his nationality should be established.

It was very cold and we stamped our feet for warmth. Our breath still showed mistily in the frozen air. As time passed we generated a little heat and watched the country through our little slot, and were impressed by its vast loneliness and silence.

“On these plains a nation died,” I said to Shura.

“On these plains a nation was betrayed,” he replied.

One of the merchants spoke a little German, and he was very pleased when I recited the three prayer Suras from the Koran in Arabic to him. I told him I had learnt them in Algeria, which place he still

imagined to be under Turkish control, as indeed he considered the whole of the known world to be. They gave me some tobacco from Samsun, which is better for cigarettes than it is for a pipe, in which I smoked it. The merchants were overjoyed at the flight of the Armenians, since they could now come in to their own and start in business with the advantage of loot.

The time passed agreeably and the train kept up a fair speed. Finally in the evening we arrived at Kars.

From the station we were taken to what appeared to be a guard-room full of soldiers, and thence to the town commandant's. He was most polite and gave us coffee and cigarettes. He told us that we would have to interview General Kazim Kara Bekir Pasha on the morrow, and that to-night we could sleep downstairs. On returning to the guard-room, where I had left my coat, I found they had discovered my revolver, which they took possession of "as a precaution."

Food was brought to us and we ate a good meal.

We slept in our coats amongst the soldiers.

Many thoughts were present for company that night and I began to regret I had brought Shura, since, though I did not mind for myself, his mother had placed such confidence in my belief that I could bring him through safely.

Although at the present time I did not expect that we would be delayed long, I could not help wondering whether Kars would not see us for a longer time than I wished. Kars had a bad name for prisons and



strange happenings, and the more I thought of it, the more unpleasant my thoughts became.

We were now well within Turkish territory and consequently completely cut off from the world. People were not of much consequence in Anatolia, especially Armenians. . . .

The fact that Shura could not speak Armenian and spoke Russian without the trace of an accent encouraged me to believe all would be well with him. Then, again, what of me?

With these thoughts I slept, and, what is more, slept well.

In the morning we washed in freezing water and were given a loaf of black bread to eat, which I should have eaten with greater avidity had I known that white bread (according to the latest medical notions) encourages cancer.

A soldier came for us about ten o'clock and we set out through the town for our expected interview with Kazim Kara Bekir, the terror of Armenians and Bolsheviks.

The streets were full of mud and snow, and houses showed gaping mouths to their opposite numbers where a shell had broken in the roof and burnt out the interior.

Shops were open, however, cake shops and tailors' shops. Here and there a cobbler, or a smithy worked by old Armenians who had been too infirm or too weary to flee from the invading hordes. In one street I saw hastening away a Bolshevik I had known in Erivan, a Tartar Kommissar of ugly mien. I did not

wish to run into him at this stage of the proceedings and was heartily glad to see him disappear round the corner of a building. Everywhere were traces of the evacuation and hurried flight. Odd bits of accoutrements still littered the streets and wandering dogs found relish in the frozen grease off military billy-cans and dixies. There was no glass in any of the windows, and poles stuck out from most of them with the Turkish flag nailed to their ends, flapping briskly in the cold air.

There are two stories of the origin of the Turkish flag—red with the white star and crescent.

The one tells of a battle under the great Osman when a Turkish detachment was found cut to pieces. Wrapped half round the body of their leader was the white flag of Mohammed, covered with blood save where his curved scimitar lay underneath and the cross hilt of his weapon touched the silk. Roughly this left a white pattern of a crescent and star.

The other story is of Osman gazing into a pool of blood in which the half moon and a star were reflected.

“In the pity of the moon and stars on the blood of our brothers shall we see an omen of the heavens’ solace,” he said, and from that was the Turkish flag evolved.

Which of the two is correct I do not attempt to say, but they are both held in Turkey as the origin of their flag and heated discussions can often be heard on the subject.

A dead mule or two thanked the frost for keeping

its death away from olfactory knowledge, and when I asked our guide why it was not buried, he replied that there were not enough Armenians in Kars to do the work.

After a short walk we came to a row of low buildings, outside which stood red-and-white-striped sentry-boxes.

We entered and sat down, whilst soldiers went back and forth, apparently looking for an officer in charge.

After about ten minutes an officer entered and told me we could not see the General as he was away, but we should see Roufat Bey, the head of the Intelligence. He then left us.

Roufat Bey, our guide told us, was a very clever man; but this we were to discover later for ourselves.

"This time," I thought, "we shall have to mind where we step," and I looked at Shura to see if he understood.

This was to be the great test for Shura's nationality, and also for me not to give away my chief reason for being in Armenia, since, if once they knew I had gone there to train troops to be used against them, they might well say I had been sent by England and was therefore a spy.

Some time passed and then we were told to follow.

We were ushered into a room, a word of command in Turkish rang out and the door closed, leaving Shura and me alone in the room with Roufat Bey.

The room was bare save for a table covered with papers, including my two passports.

Behind the table sat a well-built handsome man between thirty-five and forty years old, with a keen pair of dark eyes and a turned-up moustache. He rose and bowed, offered us coffee and cigarettes and, pointing us out two seats, sat down in front of us and began. . . .

## CHAPTER VIII

"You are an Englishman?"

"I am."

Turning to Shura: "And you are a Russian?"

"I am."

"Or an Armenian?" Roufat Bey asked quickly.

"No. My mother was Armenian; my father Russian. I come from Rostov and was never in Armenia till I fled thither after the revolution."

"What is he to you?" asked Roufat Bey of me.

"A friend."

He raised his eyebrows.

"There is no such thing as friendship amongst Europeans. That is a prerogative of the Oriental."

"Dennoch ist er mein Freund," I replied, but my inquisitor only smiled.

"You wish to go to Trebizond and then to Constantinople, where the English are beating the Turks with rods and breaking into their houses?"

"I wish to go to Constantinople. I gather the two nations are at peace."

"Oh, no. We are still at war." There was a silence.

"How did you get to Armenia and what did you go for?"

"I went out of curiosity. I travelled by Egypt from Algeria." But, unfortunately, seeing he did

not understand where Algeria was, I called it by its Arabic name—El Djezair.<sup>1</sup> Here I made a mistake which I did not realise for some months. Roufat Bey wrote something down.

“Have you served during the war against the Turks?”

“No.” I remember he looked unbelieving.

“Tell me about the Bolsheviki.”

I told him all I could.

“Don’t you believe it?” I asked at the end.

“Oh, yes,” he replied, “but that is nothing; I have seen worse things in Russia at the time of the revolution when I was still a prisoner of war, but then it is good to kill the bourgeoisie. Bolshevism is a fine thing.”

Here I disagreed with him entirely, and he smiled. I immediately realised that he was trying to find out whether I was a Bolshevik spy or not. Later on he gave me many proofs of his distaste for their methods. He plied me with questions on many subjects—Mohammedanism, British Imperialism, Touranianism, Bolshevism, Armenian revolutionary activity, N.E.R. work, European War, etc., changing from one to the other with amazing rapidity and regaling me with coffee and innumerable cigarettes.

Again he turned to Shura and questioned him on his parentage; but apart from the lie that his father was Russian, there was nothing that could be used against him, and my fears were allayed. He spoke a

<sup>1</sup> In North Mesopotamia there is also an area known as El Djezair, which if I had been there would have pointed to my having been employed with the British forces in Mesopotamia.



lot of Constantinople and the British occupation, showing great Anglophobia.

He was very keen to know the strength of the Allied forces there, but as I was incapable of giving the figures, I told him there was an army corps composed of an equal number of cavalry, infantry and artillery, which, of course, was far in advance of the strength. He suggested that the N.E.R. were either spies or commercial agents on the look-out for oil, but nevertheless considered they were of great use in looking after orphans of all religions.

He told me that even if there were oil in Turkey, the Government would never allow its exploitation, since it would introduce European commercialism, which was even worse than Armenian. He held that only an agricultural country could be a happy one, and with this I heartily agreed.

Again he asked if I wished to proceed to Trebizond.

"As soon as possible," I replied.

"You wish to take this Russian with you?"

"Of course."

"What politics do you hold?" he asked quickly.

"I am a Social Democrat."

"And you?"

Here Shura answered thoughtlessly, "I am a Social Revolutionary." Thereby he told Roufat that he was a Dashnak, which was false.

Roufat Bey rose and shook hands with me. I felt a load lift from my heart. Suddenly he looked at me and spoke slowly.

"You will go to Erzeroum and be imprisoned."

I was amazed.

"And my friend?" I asked.

"Ah. He is an Armenian. . . . Guten Tag." He rang a bell and a soldier entered. He bowed to us and left the room. I looked at Shura.

"Taak," he said; but I could not answer. I dreaded to think what his last remark to Shura meant.

So after all this it was to be another prison. It seemed very hard. A true leap from the frying-pan into the fire, and yet it was all my fault.

We left the building with the soldier and returned to the guard-room. On the way thither I apologised to Shura for bringing him into Turkey, but he was nothing but helpful and refused to say it was anything to do with me.

We wondered what would happen and thought how easy it was to disappear in Kars and leave no trace behind.

The sun was shining brightly as we turned into the guard-room, and I looked back at streets and sky and houses, which mean certain liberty in comparison to four walls and a ceiling. We stayed for some time downstairs, and then the N.C.O., or rather Orderly Room Clerk of the Town Commandanture, bade us follow him upstairs. He was a quiet, kind-hearted, bearded man who had suffered much as a prisoner of war in Russia, like so many of the Turks here, and was very sympathetic, in consequence, to all prisoners.

He had his failings, of course; for he was orientally dishonest, that is to say, not secretive in his appropriation of another's belongings, but taking things from

prisoners because they would be of no use to them during their term of detention.

He showed us into a room, papered but bare, with two beds on which were palliasses, two big windows and a Russian stove in the corner. Here he left us and the door was closed, leaving a sentry outside armed with rifle and bayonet.

Our windows gave on to a side street, to the left of which we could plainly see the main one. They were large and paned, one being open to air the room. As a prison this was certainly by far the best I had seen, and I hoped that the one at Erzeroum would be as good. On the walls were a few inscriptions in Russian, one especially attracting my attention, written obviously by someone not too well acquainted with the language.

It ran as follows: "Ia Iousouf Adil Kemal bijal at Bolshevikov, ee bwil pa General Kazim Kara Bekir arestovan," which translated means, "I, Joseph Adil Kemal, fled from the Bolsheviki and was arrested by General Kazim Kara Bekir." Little did I think then what a part Joseph Kemal was to play in my prison life of the future.

We did not know whether we were the only prisoners in the building, yet we knew that the ordinary civil and military prisons in Kars were full of Armenians and Russian or Turkish Communists. This we learnt from the N.C.O., but we were careful not to ask questions about near neighbours lest he suspect communication.

We sat down on the bed and talked. We were amazed that we had not been searched, and conse-

quently looked through our pockets for articles that might betray. The only thing I found to get rid of was my Armenian military badge, which I immediately threw on the top of the tall Russian stove, where it clinked with pleasure at encountering other metal articles which were invisible to us below, but were probably remnants of the Armenian occupation when the same building was in the hands of their military police commandant.

Pacing up and down and thinking began again.

Suddenly a gun boomed from the fortress. We started. Midday. Only the midday gun, but in prison sounds augment and some have greater portent than others.

An hour later, our friend the N.C.O. came to tell us we could have food brought from the Turkish restaurant if we chose to pay for it.

This we did and continued doing during our time at Kars. It gave a little freedom to our minds, this edible contact with the outside world. It gave us a connection with people who were free. It is difficult to explain.

The dish was good, as all Turkish dishes are, a ragout of some kind, perfectly flavoured, and with it were two "diamonds" of "pachlova"<sup>1</sup> each.

I began to prefer this prison to the one in Erivan.

And so the days passed, and we talked and paced up and down, and I drew pictures on pieces of paper and wrote little rhymes and did translations of invented fairy tales into the languages I knew, until

<sup>1</sup> A form of pastry cut in a diamond shape, and covered with honey and interset with finely-chopped walnuts.

eventually I learnt four or five different words for wolves, grandmothers, fairies, and ogres, and could intermingle the languages in translations of castles, caves, chocolate-houses and witches.

I gave Shura French lessons and he gave me Russian ones, and the time passed agreeably till the evenings, when we turned to discussing our position, and then we were morose and began to strain our ears and catch sounds that were not intended for our ears—faint rifle shots and scurrying feet on the pavement outside. . . .

We heard steps in the room next door and we were very curious to know the identity of our fellow-prisoners. We tapped on the wall, but no answer came. I remember that at this time I wrote an essay on Wolsey's charge to Cromwell about ambition, and how once the ambition is attained it is never what you expect it to be and in five minutes it has lost its savour; of how if you strive for attainment of this thing ambition, you will probably succeed, and at the end life will be even emptier than before and you will have to cast about for another ambition to keep yourself going.

I had had three myself and had attained them, therefore in this prison I was able to review them at length and realise the selfishness of each and the futility of all of them. However, I was weak, and promised myself one more, and that was to publish a book. A little ambition, a paltry ambition and my last; except the general one which is more in the nature of an intention, and is simply one's personal doctrine of life, duty, service and the rest.

Many essays on many themes one wrote and burnt in the small iron stove that served us for warmth and consumed less than the big Russian one would have done.

We had brought with us a large map of the district that Shura had taken from the Bolshevik headquarters at Erivan, and were studying it one evening when our friend the N.C.O. came in for a chat. He did not say anything to us about it, but, on leaving, took the map with him and we looked at each other, Shura and I, and wondered.

We did not have long to wait, for I was soon summoned to the commandant's room, where Roufat Bey was also sitting drinking coffee.

He told me it was a Dashnak map and showed the boundaries of Armenia as laid down by President Wilson, and he wondered how I had got it. I replied that we had taken it during the counter-revolution and had intended it for use on our way to the coast.

Roufat Bey was not impressed, and harped continually on the fact that it was the kind of map a spy would carry.

He then asked me if I had any other documents, and I returned to my room for the photographs of the massacre, telling Shura hurriedly what I had said.

Roufat Bey took the photographs in silence, and looked at them with interest as I explained the circumstances. He then passed them to the Town Commandant with a smile, saying: "Somebody knows how to deal with the Dashnakzutoun."

This annoyed me and I replied that that was the fate awaiting him if Russia should take a liking to Kars.



"Herr Gefangener, wir lassen uns nicht hinters Licht führen," was his cold answer.

However, I left him in a good humour and returned to the room. Shura was next sent for, and on his return told of how he had been questioned about me and my doings in Erivan.

We told each other what we had said and were satisfied we had not implicated ourselves more than in the actual possession of the map. My photographs, however, were kept and I saw little chance of ever seeing them again.

Our N.C.O. friend seemed to take a serious view of the case and was unable to see my point when I suggested that we should have burnt our map long ago if we had feared incrimination as a result of possessing such a thing.

We worried about this for the rest of the evening, but eventually came to the conclusion that "shto boodyet, boodyet,"<sup>1</sup> and with that as a consolation another day was added to our list of prison days, and the morrow showed us one day nearer freedom.

About this time I thought it might be a good thing to try and get into touch with the American N.E.R. in the town, so I accordingly wrote them a polite note and asked if they could give me some underclothes and a toothbrush. I mentioned that Mr. White<sup>2</sup> had told me to ask them for anything I might need, so I did not feel like a beggar at the

<sup>1</sup> "What will be, will be."

<sup>2</sup> This Mr. White later, answering Kazim Kara Bekir, informed him that Dr. Ussher was known to them as an American gentleman in Erivan with no connection with the N.E.R., and that I had never been employed by the N.E.R.

back door about it. Our N.C.O. promised to deliver the note.

We waited in great expectation the whole of that day, but no answer came. The day after, however, our N.C.O. returned and said that Captain Dangerfield, to whom he had delivered the note, had replied that he knew nothing about me and did not believe I came from Erivan nor had ever served there with the N.E.R., as I had told Roufat Bey.<sup>1</sup>

Stupidly we were both disheartened at the news, for we saw quite clearly what Roufat Bey would think now that I had been disowned by the N.E.R. Our future was beginning to look black. The days dragged on and a week had passed. The daily routine consisted of walking, talking, eating, thinking, sleeping, and the more we thought the worse it was for us, and the more we talked the worse we made our position out to be.

We burnt paper in quires, so much did we write and draw and play noughts and crosses on. Our pencils were sharpened by burning the ends and peeling off the charred bits with our finger-nails.

We also wrote our names under Joseph Kemal's in English, French, German, Arabic, Russian and Greek, and had a great argument over the latter language, for I held there was no letter "B" in modern Greek and so used the "pi" instead.

This and countless games did we play to relieve monotony, interspersed with wrestling bouts, which was the only exercise we could take.

Another week came, dragged and went, and our

<sup>1</sup> This note *may* never have reached him.

N.C.O. could tell us nothing of our fate or how long we were to stay. Roufat Bey had gone to Angora and Kazim Kara Bekir had returned.

Rumour came to us of fighting round Erivan, and we wondered how that could be, since we imagined that the Bolsheviki had taken the town weeks before, in fact shortly after we left Bashabaran. We were not enlightened for some time, and we therefore had plenty to discuss.

Every day at twelve the fortress gun boomed out the midday time signal, and we began to look for this as the great daily diversion.

Another amusement we had was waiting for the passing of the N.E.R. women workers, who rode past our building on horseback dressed in a black habit and knee-breeches, which must have looked very "Christian" to the Turkish soldiers, who always stared as if the devil himself were riding by.

I forget the actual date of the celebrations for the victory over Greece, but I think they took place towards the end of March. Anyway there were great rejoicings, parades of soldiery, feasts and merry-making. We ourselves, poor prisoners, were given a handful of tobacco each and therefore were able to celebrate the victory with the others.

I was very disturbed that I could get no definite news of the events in the Near East, or even learn how the Greeks had been defeated, or what Mr. Lloyd George thought about the failure of his enterprise.

As a military adventure the Greek attack will go down in history as one of the many post-war follies;

and people who study the situation of that time will wonder why the subjugation of Turkey was not effected from the north-east.

It seemed a great tragedy that the misery and misfortune of three countries should have resulted from our failure to dictate peace terms to Turkey. The tragedy, however, will become greater each year, and from the diplomatic failures of 1918-1923 the future troubles will undoubtedly spring and cause a greater conflagration than has ever been known.

In the Near East are struggling forces of great power: religion, nationalism, pan-Touranianism, Christian minority feeling, racial hatreds, Bolshevism, jealousy and imperialism, and each and all of these, to my mind, have been fanned to flame by Great Britain's post-war foreign policy, directed by Marquis Curzon of Kedleston. . . .

However, let the future prove. . . .

This day, then, of victory celebration was a diversion, and we watched from the corner of our window and saw as much of joy as we could. Our N.C.O. knew nothing of the Greeks or even where they lived, except that it was "somewhere near France"!

He concluded that they had been beaten by the will of Allah because they were infidels, but otherwise he was not disposed to worry about them.

We had an Armenian peasant who brought us in wood for our stove. A tall, powerfully-built, black-bearded man, most excellent at chopping wood, which we watched him do in the side-street below our windows.

He had stayed behind during the evacuation and was now used by the Turks as a general slave, earning only food in exchange for his labour.

He had a cheerful disposition, and seemed to have no cares in the world. His joy was work and his work joy, and for this I was grateful, for he brought a glad atmosphere into our lonely room.

One day when he carried his load in we noticed his beard had vanished. He told us he had been ordered by the Turkish officer to shave it off, since it was not seemly for an infidel to carry the marks of respect, old age and wisdom, which is the signification to a Mohammedan.

Many a morning the sound of his axe in the street brought us from our beds to the window, where we watched till his job was completed. He would chop up a two-foot log in less time than it would take two men with a cross-cut saw so to do.

I have since forgotten his name, but it was often on my lips during those days.

He was very ignorant of things that went on around him, but held a very sensible philosophy—God and the job under his hand for the time being.

Another man who brought us in wood occasionally was of a very different type. An old man, with a sad, wistful face and grey beard. An Armenian of the much-suffered sort, with a craving for tobacco.

He would come in and ask for tobacco almost every afternoon, and in exchange would slowly shuffle his feet round in an old imitation of the Armenian folk-dance "Tassenchorce," which he hummed as he



danced. It reminded me of the "Jongleur de Notre Dame"—it was all he could do in exchange. . . .

His expression never changed. I called him "Tas-senchorce" and thought of him as "Walking Sorrow," which I felt would have been his name had he been a compatriot of Hiawatha.

Eagerly we looked for his arrival each day, for we felt he was a friend.

One day he came no more and we were sorry.

The cold, old age and much work had been too much for him and he had died.

I like to think of him dancing in a better sphere than this, wherein his face may light up with a knowledge of great things of which we are ignorant.

We felt lonelier after he left us. . . .

One day, as our door was ajar, we saw our next-door neighbours pass and enter their room, and Shura noticed that they looked at us.

That same evening we tapped on the wall and an answering rap followed immediately. Communication had been established.

There is always a thrill about gaining touch with fellow-prisoners even if it is only by looking and acknowledging each other with the eyes.

During my imprisonments at Erivan, Kars and Erzeroum I have made many friends, but have not spoken to them.

Sympathy can always be expressed with the eyes, and the kind of ordinary prison conversation as spoken on first acquaintance is generally: "So you have joined us, poor devil. Nothing matters in prison. You will get used to it. It's loneliness that kills: not



lack of exercise or sunlight. It's when your thoughts start going round in circles that the trouble begins. You'll pray a good deal in prison too. It's good for you. It will help. Don't answer the guards back. They're all right if you greet them with a smile in the morning. Be careful of beating your head against the wall. It is harder than your head. Keep your control: you may need it when they take you away. . . . Remember the last rifle volley you hear on earth is a salvo of welcome to the next sphere. Well, I must move on now. There's a great deal of humour in all this if you look for it. See you to-morrow."

Sometimes, of course, prisoners are not capable of control, and then they become troublesome and keep you awake all night with hysterics or curses or chattering teeth, according to their ways.

We wondered if our neighbours had any literature that we could read, and determined to ask them if we had the chance.

The following morning the moment we heard their door opening, we opened ours. The guard outside was at the end of the corridor. As our neighbours passed our door a small piece of paper was thrown into our room. I closed the door and Shura read the little note. It was from a young lawyer Shura had known in Rostov and Tiflis, who had been captured at the taking of Kars and was imprisoned with a companion, expecting to be sent to Erzeroum any day.

Shura hurriedly wrote a reply, asking for books if he had any, and giving a brief history of ourselves.

As we heard the steps returning, Shura opened our door slightly. A hand met his : the note was passed, and thus we learnt about each other.

To our surprise, during the afternoon our guard brought us in a Russian book of plays by Pushkin, a book called *Crimes Célèbres*, and an American magazine.

*Crimes Célèbres* dealt at length with the Borgias and other historical crimes, but was a joy after so long without reading.

I forget the name of the American magazine, but I remember it had an inscription on its cover, "To our Sammies," and was from Marion E. Carter of 2829 Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Ill., U.S.A.

This number I remember for two reasons. Firstly, because it seems an impossibility to Europeans, and secondly, because it is a telephone number I have always had cause to remember.

Anyway I blessed Marion E. Carter and read her magazine through, advertisements as well, which is not surprising, since in so many American magazines these are often much more interesting than the stories themselves.

Later on we took to acting one of the Russian plays, but found it too difficult with only one book.

The passing of notes continued with ease during the remainder of our time at Kars, and our neighbours gave us more than enough of their fears of removal to another world.

They wrote of the fate that had attended certain of their colleagues, and of the fact that hundreds of Armenians were in the military prison at Kars and the number was diminishing by execution.

All of this did much to worry us and time hung heavily.

We tried to find out from our N.C.O. if there were any other prisoners in the building, but were told that all others were in Erzeroum or had been repatriated : which latter was not correct.

We repeatedly asked when we were going to Erzeroum, but no satisfactory answer ever came.

From our one-time bearded Armenian we heard many tales of the indignities to which the Turks subjected the civil inhabitants of Kars.

If a Turk desired any particular Armenian woman, all he had to do was to arrest the husband as a spy.

If the husband caused too much trouble he was shot at once, and the excuse was always the same : "In 1915, when the Armenians took Erzeroum, this man killed my cousin."

Since the poor man was dead it would have been impossible for him to prove that in 1915 he was in America, so the murderer was dismissed and the crime written down as "justifiable revenge."

One Armenian who refused to surrender a ring was murdered for it, and the same Turkish excuse was used with the same result.

These incidents were of almost daily occurrence during my time at Kars, but it was all part of the Turkish policy of seeing that no Armenians remain in Armenia, and the consequent justification of its possession by Turkey.

It was difficult to believe in listening to these tales, as also it had been to see the remains of the massacres

both here and in Erivan, that the League of Nations was still in existence. It is even more amazing now in 1924 to believe that such things still go on, and the lips of Geneva are sealed although there is a Turkish representative in the Assembly.

Perhaps they fear he would treat the League as Ismet Pasha treated Great Britain at Lausanne: in which case it may be as well to "lie low and say nuffin" for their own reputation.

However, it is a bad thing to hark back and bewail; and we return to the story, which, monotonous as it may be, is nothing to the monotony of this prison at Kars, where three weeks had been passed in idleness of mind and body, wherein both seemed to feed on reserve supplies of nerve force till one dreaded the moment when the reserve went dry.

I was interested in watching the effect of prison on Shura.

Prior to this experience he had always treated life as if he had not a care in the world, and to a large extent lived rather more for Shura than anyone else. In fact, let me say, it was his doctrine, for his was a nature ambitious and somewhat selfish. This I had often told him, and in Erivan had laughingly said that imprisonment would teach him many things, for only by suffering can we understand. . . .

In Kars I was able to watch the change: a quieter outlook, an interest in those less fortunate, a slight knowledge of the brotherhood of man and the inhumanity of man, the give and take back of Fate, the comfort of literature and the desire for knowledge, the superiority of mind over the body, the bearing of

disappointment after disappointment and the terror of hoping too much. . . .

He began a diary in the third week, relating everything from our departure from Erivan onwards, with remarks about the Turks (which I edited heavily and burnt), and remarks about the N.E.R. at Kars with which I heartily agreed, though adding a rider praising their work for orphans. We hoped it would be what the critics call "a human document," but I rather feared its truth would meet with a different reception and be termed "a document depicting the adventures of two young men in Turkey, of no particular literary merit and boring in its description of prison life, which has obviously been painted 'plus noir' than we can believe."

I felt sure there would be a French word or two in the criticism. However, the document will never see the light of day, for it (or its ashes) lies in the heart of Anatolia.

I also began to teach Shura English, which we did by cutting up little squares of paper and writing the Russian on one side and the English on the other.

By this means we translated an American short story and several advertisements, although we found difficulty with certain words that are coined by ambitious New York drug stores.

Reproduction of the pictures in four colours was another pastime; the four colours being lead pencil, charcoal (from burnt wood), indelible pencil and wet indelible pencil.

Should the picture be of a young man in straw hat and no braces talking to a young woman, hatless and

earnest, then we would trace out the pair and put them into Georgian or Russian costume and prefer the effect.

Paper we seemed to have plenty of; yet I forget now how we came to have it, or whether our N.C.O. supplied us.

But then that is one of the gaps in memory which are unaccountable.

We had unfortunately held a conversation with the Armenian as he was chopping wood in the court below, and the result was that two men came in and barred up both our windows with strong planks at even distances.

This seemed to us quite unnecessarily stupid, since, had we wanted to escape by the window, these wooden nailed bars could have been removed easily.

Thinking of our window reminds me that we often watched a cat walking along the ledge beneath, but he could never be induced to come inside or even to stay and talk. He was always busy about his business, which I think was one of deep affection for a female of his species.

We often wondered where she lived and what she was like, but perhaps she was a Turkish cat and consequently kept behind a material yashmak.

Shura looked on the new planks as a gift from Heaven and proceeded to write thereon an epitaph in Russian for us both. I was afraid we should be punished for this, but nothing happened, and as our N.C.O. generally came to visit us in the evening, when we had no light but that of the fire, it was probably not noticed.



One morning, when the sun was shining more brightly than usual, the N.C.O. came in and told us we were to go to the "Hammam."

This to us was a breath of liberty undreamed of, but we wondered whether this was not Turkish politeness for immediate execution or for a change of quarters to something worse.

Down the stairs we went, and out into the open street with the N.C.O. and an "asker."<sup>1</sup>

The feel of open sky as a roof after more than three weeks was good to the senses and exhilarating to the heart.

We walked down the wide street to the River Kars, where the ice lay in pancake formation between the hard frozen mud of the two banks. A party of soldiers passed and we heard a band practising in the distance. On our right loomed the high rock of the fortress from which the midday gun boomed forth in its daily aggressive tone.

The baths were occupied when we arrived, and we had to wait outside by a little row of shops that leant against the rock's base. Here was a cobbler, a baker and a tailor, and at the cobbler's door stood a well-dressed Caucasian. Our N.C.O. remained talking to the bath-keeper and the "asker" was in conversation with the tailor, so we, in our turn, spoke to the Caucasian.

He was an Azerbaijanian from Baku who had fled thence after the May massacres, and was now, I gathered, an adviser to the counter-espionage service in Turkey, dealing with Russian affairs.

<sup>1</sup> Private soldier.

We spoke of Russia for some time and then were summoned to the bath.

The "Hammam" lay just by the main bridge, standing high over the river, which, below the bridge, was frothing at its new-found freedom from the ice.

It was a dark little place, but the main room was tiled in many colours and the water was warm and wonderful.

We spent a good quarter of an hour in this bath, throwing the water over each other from the copper bowls, and another quarter of an hour in picking the lice off our clothes so that the worn fabric could have another chance.

We revelled like little Londoners at their first visit to the sea.

It was now about the 2nd or 3rd of April, and we had not had a proper wash since March 9th. However, that period was to fade into insignificance before long, with rather more irritating results.

We walked back refreshed and light-hearted through the wide street under an unsullied blue sky in the crisp warmth of a late winter's morning.

That afternoon we were happier than we had been for many a day. The bath and the few minutes of open sky worked wonders on our morale, so that we felt like riding on a hay-cart towards the setting sun, which we both decided was one of our greatest childhood joys.

We also felt that this bath was to be the beginning of something new; probably our long-expected move to Erzeroum.

"Mit hohen Kopf'und grossem Ruhm!  
Fahren wir nach Erzeroum."

Thus we sang : taking the unknown to be better than the present, which, in wild countries, is always optimistic and rarely true.

The days went slowly by and our month in Kars came to a close, and we yearned for a change.

By this time the rumour of our departure waxed strong and open. I was apprehensive of the cold, and so asked our N.C.O. if he would buy me a pair of felt boots, which are the finest snow-shoes in the world, provided they do not get wet. These he bought me, and they were to prove of the greatest comfort and service.

The day of departure came and Shura and I made up our baggage and prepared for the future.

My luggage consisted of a flannel shirt, a blanket, and my "sapagui"<sup>1</sup> Shura's of a pair of extremely disconnected pants, a blanket and a belt.

Down the stairs and once more into the open air. With an "asker" as guide and guard we made our way to the station.

There we saw the same line of baggage vans, at the door of which stood two sentries. We were handed over to these two, and our "asker" placed a packet in the hands of an officer who appeared to be in command of the train. Several Turkish merchants were sitting in adjoining wagons, but our special one was reserved.

Sitting in the back of our wagon were two men, apparently also prisoners. The one about thirty-eight years old, black-moustached and smiling, the other tall, young, good-looking, with black hair and

<sup>1</sup> Russian leather boots.

blue eyes and a sad, preoccupied expression. We clambered in and sat in the corner.

No one spoke.

An hour later the train moved out and our guards began to sing. I was glad of this, for I judged they would not be obnoxious.

Kars, with its huge fortress and deep ravine, moved slowly away into the distance, and gave place to the great plain dotted with its fortresses, trenches and marshes, that made the whole look like an outpost at the end of the world, since as far ahead as one could see the white plain blinked into eternity.

The guards asked us questions in Turkish which we could not understand. This induced the smaller of the prisoners to interpret to us in Russian. Thus the conversation began, and still the younger prisoner sat gazing at the crack in the doorway through which he could see the gliding landscape.

The elder prisoner was called Mustapha Maksout and was a Kurd; the other was Joseph Adil Kemal, the writer of the inscription we had read in our prison room, a Circassian and ex-officer in the Imperial Turkish army.

We were silent after our mutual introduction and still Kemal had not spoken, having left his friend to tell us his name and race.

The train rattled and bumped and the white plain seemed interminable.

## CHAPTER IX

As the train rolled on, our fellow-prisoner—Maksout—told us his history, simply and unostentatiously.

As a boy he was brought up by an uncle in the mountains of Kurdistan, his father and mother having died shortly after his birth. As a youth he descended into the plains and sought work at a small township south of Kharpoot.

He worked as a hewer of wood and drawer of water for a Turkish Bey who possessed a very beautiful wife, to whom he was devoted.

Unfortunately the Bey's business frequently took him away from home, and during his absence young Maksout conceived a great worship for his beautiful mistress.

After some few years in this same occupation he was called up for military service, and during those military years his worship became stronger.

Shortly after his return his master fell ill and died, and Maksout, summoning up courage, began to pay court to his sorrowing mistress. As her sorrow gradually grew less, she began to look on Maksout as something more than a servant, till finally she promised him her hand in marriage in a year's time. Six months of the year went by and suddenly war was declared.

Maksout rejoined his regiment and was taken prisoner by the Russians in 1916.

After the revolution he became a Bolshevik, and was President of the Turkish section of Bolshevik propaganda in Baku till the relations between his country and Russia became more friendly. He was then given permission to return to his home, and armed with gold roubles for propaganda purposes he started forth full of joy in the hope of seeing the woman he loved after so long a parting.

At Nachitchevan he was arrested as a spy and deserter and immediately sent to Kars. The only thing he had ever cared for in his life seemed to have been snatched from him when it was within his grasp, but still his love burnt strongly and he hoped his release would see the realisation of his ambition.

I have never seen a man speak of woman with such reverence and devotion as did this little Kurd. He was amazingly ignorant and a confirmed atheist, yet with a tender heart and most engaging smile.

He spoke in whispers of his friend Kemal and touched his forehead repeatedly.

"Mad," he would say, "young and mad, but how he has suffered."

Our "askers" were cheerful and talkative as well.

To them I was a curiosity, since they held that I was the only Englishman left in the world, for all the others had been either killed by the Turks or driven into the sea.

They did not think much of Europeans except that they were very kind and built railways and



roads for the Turks to occupy at the end of each war.

By this they meant the military railway from Sarakamisch to Erzeroum, and the great Russian road thence to Trebizond.

Eventually we arrived at this very Sarakamisch, where the broad-gauge railway gives way to a narrow military one. We detrained and were hurried through the snow to a small "khan"<sup>1</sup> where boarded beds lay at odd angles about the bare room. Here we were given a loaf of black bread each and eventually wrapped ourselves up for the night.

The day broke bright and cold, but it was well on in the morning when we were led out and put on the new train that was to take us all the way to Erzeroum.

Sarakamisch is the beginning of a less barren stretch of country and lies at the bottom of a series of thinly wooded slopes, the trees being all coniferous. The absence of the snow would have been a great blessing, for, as it was, all levels were similar and the many streamlets were hidden, save only where a track had transformed the snow into slush and betrayed what it had hitherto covered.

Two new officers who had spent the night in the "khan" came on with us into the new train, but had a wagon to themselves and were well looked after by their servants, who brought them coffee, Caucasian bread, butter and goat's cheese.

Kemal had broken his silence in the "khan" over-night by passionate outbursts against Turkey

<sup>1</sup> Turkish shelter. Often a coffee-house. Cf. Dak bungalow.

and Mustapha Kemal. These he continued when in the train, and Maksout, edging towards us, repeated his confidence—"Mad—young and mad, but how he has suffered."

Eventually our train snorted and creaked and we started slowly on the last stage of our journey, rolling through high banks of snow that had been made by the clearing of the track by poor Armenian peasants who stood waist-deep in the snow and watched us with hungry eyes, clutching their rags round their shoulders, their teeth chattering with the cold, their shovels held loosely in their yellow hands. Kemal broke off and watched them. "Ah," he said, "the poor devils. See what the Turk does to his prisoners. They die in hundreds and nobody cares."

Kemal began to talk more as the journey continued and he told us terrible tales of the treatment of young officers in the Turkish military schools. He spoke of Roumania and the Roumanians, on whose front he had fought, and related how he had been captured by the Russians in 1916.

After the revolution he became a Bolshevik and longed to be able to do propaganda in Turkey for the Soviet cause in order to get his own back on the "Pasha system" of that country, of which he was only a member by adoption on the part of his father. Later he became disgusted by the behaviour of his brother Communists and deserted to the White forces in Northern Mongolia. He was recaptured by Reds and imprisoned, awaiting execution when Koltchak routed his division and took over all the prisoners. These were lined up in rows and cut down by the

“shashka,”<sup>1</sup> but in the confusion Kemal managed to escape.

After countless adventures, Kemal reached Baku, where he became editor of a Turkish Communist paper.

In February he was made member of a mission to Turkey, but on arrival every Turkish subject of the mission was cunningly enticed into a different town, and there they either just disappeared or were arrested.

Kemal, because he had been an officer in the Turkish army, was so far the only one alive, and he had been condemned to death with Maksout before a military court in Kars.

The fact that our fellow-prisoners were two condemned men began to worry us and we questioned Kemal as to whether he had heard anything about us.

“Yes,” replied Kemal, “you are an English spy, and your friend is, I suppose, your interpreter, but I have heard nothing of him. I heard from an officer that maps had been found on you. Have you been tried?”

“No,” I answered.

“You may not be. England is beaten. Nobody is afraid of them any more. You may go to Trebizond like the head of our mission and meet with one of Enver’s men.”

“What does that mean?”

“A shot in the dark.” . . .

And then we fell to talking of Enver, and he told me many tales. There was a young cadet at the military school at Constantinople who was taken ill

<sup>1</sup> Cossack sword.

on parade and asked to be excused. The commanding officer thereupon felled the boy to the ground with his scabbard. His parents, who were watching the parade, wrote to Enver Pasha, then Minister for War, and as a result were imprisoned for three months for interfering with the conduct of the war.

Kemal related also the famous story of how Enver went up to the first line near Kars to help stem a Russian advance and was surrounded by the enemy. He managed to escape by being carried over a mountain pass on the back of one of his soldiers. Once he reached safety he shot his rescuer lest it should become known that Enver had fled in the face of the enemy.

The War Minister's personal bravery could never be questioned, least of all in that case, so his action seemed entirely unnecessary; but it was Enver's way, and Enver, the son of a cobbler, was a great man in spite of his atrocities.

All this time our train was slowly butting through the snow, and every mile or so we waited while batches of half-naked Armenians cleared the snow as we passed them by.

The night came and we had had no food since the morning. Our "askers" thought it would be possible to buy something during the following afternoon, so we lived in hopes.

The sight of these little gangs of prisoners made one's heart bleed. Here and there a body in the snow; here and there we saw a man drop as he shovelled the snow, whilst his colleagues worked on, making curious whimpering sounds, like starving

dogs. And meanwhile the League of Nations, well-dressed and well-fed, sat in the warmed Salle des Nations at Geneva, and discussed whether or not Liberia and San Marino should become members of this great humanitarian association. . . .

And when I write this I feel certain it will be construed into an "unwarrantable attack on the League of Nations."

But I hold it is not unwarrantable; for these things and worse happened before my eyes, and deportations continued till 1923. Armenia is in a worse state now than ever before—and nothing is done or has been done by the League to support either the rights of minorities, the rights of the race or the right of this people to exist. . . .

Kemal gave us also much news of the Bolshevik invasion of Georgia, which had started in February and of which we had heard nothing.

It appeared that after a feint attack on the southern frontier by Armenian Red troops, the main attack on Tiflis took place from Baku on the east and from the Darial pass on the north.

The Georgians hoped against hope that Turkey would help them by entering from Alexandropol, north-east, but the Kemalists made no move, since they were awaiting the decision of the London Conference, which was then sitting and procrastinating the whole question of an alliance with Turkey in order to satisfy the oil-seekers of Mosul.

During this difficult period when Tiflis was almost entirely surrounded, the Allied military missions were still in the town, only leaving on the 17th.

On the 19th of February the southern front was broken during the night, and the Government left westwards for Batoum.<sup>1</sup>

Tiflis fell on the 25th of February and the Georgian army fell back on Batoum.

The Bolsheviki then attacked from the north along the coast-line and were heavily shelled by the French fleet in the Black Sea; France alone of all the Allies trying to prevent the invasion of an independent state by an Imperialist power.

All of a sudden the Turks began to act. Frightened by seeing the port of Batoum, which lay due north of their line, occupied by the Bolsheviki, they entered the town on the 10th of March and took over control. This, therefore, was the situation on the day after I left Alexandropol for Kars as a prisoner.

A treaty was later made between Russia and Turkey which gave the latter permanently Kars in exchange for Batoum.

Commandant Poidebard, who writes the whole story of the invasion of Georgia so graphically, relates his last view of the country as follows :

“ March 18th.—The Caucasus has fallen. The Red army is on the shores of the Black Sea. From Baku to Batoum she holds the Caucasus. Only the Armenians continue to resist towards Persia and in their mountains. What can these isolated people do against the Bolshevik wave which will submerge them ?

“ A little time after the Soviets entered Batoum we

<sup>1</sup> I have supplemented what I remember of Kemal's information by extracts from my friend Commandant Poidebard's fascinating book, *Au carrefour de Perse* (George Crès et Cie., Paris).



saw a launch leave the Italian ship: it carries two travellers and their luggage. They are the German Minister and his councillor, who have received from Berlin by wireless the order to return to Tiflis the moment that the troops from Moscow reach the shore of the Black Sea. The game finished, one of the winners rejoins his post."

I forget how many nights we spent in this slow-moving train; but I remember we were terribly hungry and only had one meal, and that came between two days of lack of food. I should probably be correct if I said two nights and three days.

I have memories of the high snow-banks and the poor Armenian prisoners. I remember great valleys into whose bosoms we windingly crept. I remember bleak bouldered stretches of land and ruined huts of stone. Nowhere were signs of cultivation or even of habitation, and the occasional wayside stations held only posts of *gendarmérie* and squads of working prisoners.

Kemal, whose silence, once broken, only returned in his moods of contemplative dejection, was amazingly interesting on Bolshevism and pan-Touranianism.

He spoke of that rare type of Communist to whom political belief is his religion and of how three of these were playing cards. The one who lost became angry and abused his comrades, whereupon one of the others calmly took out his revolver and shot him, resuming the game immediately, saying: "We must keep Communist discipline. No perfect state can exist with people who forget brotherhood."

He told us that the amount of "radishes" far

outnumbered the "tomatoes," and when I asked what he meant, he replied that the former were only "red" on the outside, and the latter were "red" all through.

In the evening of the third day we detrained at Erzeroum and found that the snow was clear of the plain, though it still clung to the mountains surrounding the town on three sides.

We were marched along over soft down-land grass, through muddy, cobbled, winding streets to a big dark building and up some stairs to an almost pitch-black upper hall. Here the officer in charge interviewed the Town Commandant and we were led along a passage and shown into a good-sized, low, bare room. We had hardly time to look round before we were moved across the passage to another similar room, where the rain lay in pools on the boards and left literally only a few dry spots of some two feet square.

The officer then retired and we were left with our "askers." One told us that the room we had just left was where Colonel Rawlinson had lived, but he had just been sent home to Trebizond. Colonel Rawlinson, as readers will remember, was the officer sent by the British Government to superintend the collection of all arms belonging to the defeated Turks in the villayat of Erzeroum. He was, however, arrested by the Kemalists and kept in prison for over a year before the British Government bothered to order his release from the defeated enemy. When finally his release came, it was effected by an exchange of prisoners, and this brave officer, on his return to

England, was presented with a C.B.E., we imagine as a solace for the scandalous neglect he suffered at the hands of the Empire he served so well.

On the return of the officer, Kemal asked if we had to sleep in this damp room and was told we were prisoners and should be content.

We were next searched. I had, by this time, no Turkish money and only two English five-pound notes hidden in a little note-book. My wrist-watch I had hidden under one arm-pit, my ring under the other, tied on to the hairs. My little note-book was left me, but odd letters, paper for writing and everything save my pipe and a concealed Gillette razor-blade was taken. I wore a fire opal on a chain round my neck, which I had always carried during the German war and since, but this they left me, as I told them it was a religious symbol.

From Shura they took his diary and the little pieces of paper from which he was learning English. These little slips seemed to interest them greatly.

No sooner had we been searched than two men entered, carrying a hammer and four pairs of chains.

I never remember before or since so literally feeling my heart sink. . . .

Kemal was made to take off his "sapagui" and the chains were hammered round his ankles. He sat on the window-sill while this was happening and the tears fell from his eyes continuously. We were all four dead silent. The belt was tied round his waist, and Maksout's turn came next. His face was expressionless. Shura looked at me. I shrugged my shoulders. They came towards me. I felt my

heart stop beating. This seemed the end of all things.

They were just about to fix the chains round my ankles when the officer, who had left the room after the searching, returned and bade the smith take the chains off us. This was done, the men went out and we were left alone, listening to the rattle of the chains as the smith went down the corridor.

We were silent for a long time after this. The chains had had a queer effect on all four of us.

Next we chose the driest patch of floor and laid down our coats and blankets, and slept as well as usual in spite of the drip from the melting snow through the roof.

In this room we stayed four or five days, and received as food two loaves of black bread composed chiefly of sharps and greatly of grit; the crusts alone being fit to eat.

I made my ration seem more by cutting pieces off with the Gillette razor-blade. This rather offended Kemal and Maksout, for it is contrary to Mohammedan custom to do other than break bread with the hand.

About the fourth day an "asker" came for Shura and he was led away. Kemal suggested it was the end; Maksout thought the same. Some ten minutes later he returned and hastily made up his bundle. He told me he was to work in the factory with the Armenian prisoners. I gave him one of my two five-pound notes and he left.

My loneliness now began. Shura had been such a fine companion all the while, and now his fate seemed sealed. I never expected to see him again. . . .

Kemal and Maksout made fun of my dismay at his sudden departure, and the former told of the many friends he had met in prison who had "departed": many of them at night.

I myself had seen such things, but in the past none of them had been more than acquaintances.

We stayed in this room about three more days after Shura left us, and the snow still melted on the roof and fell on the floor in incessant drops of water.

The two loaves of black bread ceased to come at a regular time, but often we were made to enjoy them when they did arrive by the fact that they were warm and fresh from the bakery. On Fridays they were always hard because they were the residue of the previous day, since no baking took place on the Mohammedan "Sunday."

Kemal became gayer than usual and told amusing tales of the Bolsheviks. He and Maksout occasionally quarrelled over their convictions.

In the courtyard on to which our windows looked we saw some thirty Armenian officers taking their morning exercise. While Shura had been with us he had pointed out General Beg Piroomov, General Araratian and several others, and it was amusing to see the interest with which they gazed at us.

They looked miserably thin and cold, but smiled and made signs to us to throw them a note. This we did with the greatest care, and it was eventually passed from one to the other whenever they thought the "askers" were not looking. We got to know one young officer very well, for he always came up close under our window and gave us a smart salute.

I think one of our notes was found by an "asker" and may have led to what followed, for of a sudden, one day, in the morning, a soldier came in and bade us prepare to move. With our small bundles on our backs we followed the "asker" out into the street.

Over cobbles and running streams of muddy snow-water we walked, till finally the walls of the barracks confronted us.

Through the archway and across a wide courtyard, up steps and into the orderly room. There a conversation took place between our "asker" and a very bejewelled officer, and shortly after we were led into a room on the first floor, overlooking the courtyard or barrack-square.

The room we were now in (my sixth place of imprisonment) was about nine paces by four, with two broken windows looking on to the barrack-square and one looking on to the passage between us and the orderly room below, which was the door we came in through.

The walls were of plaster, mostly broken away, and the floor-boards were also broken in several places.

On the floor lay three dirty-looking palliasses. Across the window were strands of barbed wire on which sparrows used to perch and watch us.

The door was closed behind us and a sentry, always without, whistled strange airs of five notes—and two of them weird accidentals at that.

It takes time to become accustomed to a new prison and so we walked up and down in silence at different



intervals, and Kemal swore and called on the Red forces to come and rescue him, which he was certain they would do if they only knew where he was.

Now began the last long stage of my trials, and from now onwards the days were wicked and the nights unkind.

Boredom, lack of exercise, of sky, of warmth, of certainty took their toll day by day.

There was little to do but gaze at the distant hills which showed over the top of the further barrack roof. Little to do but sleep and wait, with gnawing excitement, the issue of our two black loaves that had the effect of rhubarb and podophyllin.

We were not the only prisoners in the barracks, for we witnessed the daily parade of some fifty wretches, of whom four were in chains. Among the latter I remarked a young boy with fair hair, and I was interested as to his nationality.

These prisoners went out to work each day and returned in the evening and we envied them their "freedom."

Some of them were Armenians, but the greater number Turks. Many had bare feet and many but a pair of multi-patched woollen trousers and a ragged vest. A bit of rough sacking round their shoulders completed the dress. If they wore chains, then these were round their ankles, rubbing bare places in the flesh, which swelled unduly owing to the rust off the iron entering the raw place. From each anklet ran a heavy chain that fastened on to a leathern belt round the waist. If a prisoner were not watched, he would hold up the chain to relieve the weight on the

ankles, but if he were seen, an "asker" would cuff him hard across the head.

I watched these prisoners every day and noticed absences and arrivals with the greatest interest.

One day at the latrine I found myself next the fair-haired prisoner. I spoke very softly to him in French and he answered. He was a French Armenian who had served as a motor driver at Kars, and was chained because he had tried to escape when driving for the Turks at Erzeroum.

The latrines in the barracks, whither we were daily driven by an "asker," were but a brick gulley of the foulest order where it was easy to see that ninety per cent. of the users suffered from worms. However, there was a sense of freedom there. I cannot explain why, but that is how it affected me, and the short walk of some thirty yards there and back was a great joy in spite of the "asker's" bayonet which prodded one if one walked either too fast or too slow.

Several times my visit coincided with that of the other prisoners, and an exchange of notes was effected by writing on the foot-bricks with the stub end of a pencil we concealed in the wall.

I learnt from my new friend that he had seen Shura, who was well, and that they all worked in the munition factory together.

Such were the little diversities that happened in secret : the interchange of conversation with a Parisian in the heart of Anatolia. I was able, on my release, to give his name to the French authorities in Constantinople, and he was immediately liberated on

representations being made to Angora. Not so was it with poor Colonel Rawlinson. . . .

But England was not feared in those days, nor even respected.

A daily diversion was watching the arrival of our friend the Armenian officer, who came with a sack to collect the bread for his fellow-prisoners. This was the same young man who had greeted us daily with a salute from the courtyard in our other prison. He quickly discovered our whereabouts, and his smile of greeting was a very bright ray of sunshine in our weary lives.

The bread arrived in a small cart drawn by a mare whose newly-born foal trotted always by her side. On arrival the mare was unharnessed, and without more ado would turn round and go off home, her baby capering round her in circles, but always obedient and never driven by man.

The weather continued cold, though the sun made gallant efforts to melt the mountain snow and enter a little through our side window. We never could hold it for long, but were rewarded by watching it chase its shadows across the base of the Erzeroum hills.

Soldiers were constantly in the courtyard practising machine-gun drill, which they did very badly though in imitative Prussian style.

Kemal told us many tales of his days on the Roumanian front. He had a great love for the Roumanians, and his poetic sense was stirred by their folk-lore and music, of which he had learnt a considerable amount. He hated Turkey and the Turks

and his heart yearned for the hills of Circassia, of which he was a true son.

Some days he spoke a lot: others he would sit and mope from dawn to dusk, pace round the room and watch from the window for his wife, whom he believed would come and release him.

He often amused himself by counting his gold roubles and singing Russian folk-songs with a very good sense of tune and a bad sense of grammar. Maksout was always very secretive and uncommunicative, and promised us the arrival of a Red army which would effect our release and enable him to return to Kurdistan.

But none of his hopes materialised, and as the days passed Maksout became more silent, more irritable, and more atheistic, whilst his influence was depressing and monotonous.

Most of the morning was spent in watching for the bread cart. The afternoons were spent in gazing out of the window. The evenings were spent in watching the sunset; and I looked forward to the evenings, for I was glad the day was finished and I thought, perhaps, in the shape of the clouds I could see some form translatable into hope of release.

One morning when I was feeling particularly depressed, I suddenly saw a square-built, khaki-clad figure stalk up through the courtyard towards the Town Commandant's office.

A small khaki forage cap over a stern round face. A short pair of legs encased in light brown field-boots. Two hands thrust deep in his tunic pockets.

I was not mistaken. As he came nearer I saw that

it was certainly Charles Peers, whom I had last seen in Erivan. Before him went a couple of guards and behind him a Turkish officer.

He waited for a minute or two below our window whilst the officer went upstairs. I called him softly by name. He made no sign of hearing. I called louder and louder still, till I feared I should be heard by the guard. I was certain he must have heard, but he gave no sign and my heart sank. At last, I had thought, Peers will know where I am and will tell our headquarters in Constantinople when he arrives there. I wondered where his wife and baby were and how he had managed to arrive. His presence proved that Erivan had been evacuated and that the Bolsheviki were once more in possession. Some five minutes were spent by Peers in the Town Commandant's office, and then he came out again and walked away. Once more I called, but the "asker" who walked by him was the only one who heard. He turned and I withdrew from the window, leaving the shaking strands of barbed wire which protected it to prove my presence.

I then set furiously to think and wondered what had happened in Erivan, and whether Dr. Ussher was safe or not.

Maksout was overjoyed to think his friends had retaken Erivan, but Kemal raved and raged against them because of his hatred of massacres, which hatred was like the wind—very changeable.

I tried to find out from our guard what Peers was doing in Erzeroum, but could get no information, although I asked one who had been four years in the

U.S.A. He was so full of "Gees" and "I guesses" that he scarcely had time to answer a question before he would rush off into an outburst of fury because on his return to Turkey, on a visit to his relatives, he had been conscripted, although he called himself a naturalised American citizen, and dreamt nightly of the glories of the Stars and Stripes and the marvellous skill of American financiers in chasing the oil markets of the Near East.

It was some few days after Peers' arrival and departure that once more my eyes caught sight of two familiar figures at the far end of the courtyard. This time I did not shout. I did not want to be seen.

The figures were those of Chalgadzian and Joseph Markossian, who had apparently also fled from Erivan and were making their way to Constantinople.

I was very much afraid that if they saw me they would tell of my early activities in the Armenian army and consequently prove I had fought the Turks, though in a very "reserve line" capacity.

I was to learn later that these two were imprisoned with the Armenian officers, and that Chalgadzian was to buy his liberty by the betrayal of a plan for escape which resulted in the execution of three of his brother-officers. Joseph stayed in Erzeroum till he was sent back to Russia with those remaining officers who wished to return thither.

Of the original 123 officers, 117 regained their liberty. Two only managed to escape. Of the other Armenian prisoners, only 355 out of 7,600 ever returned home.

Twenty-five soldier prisoners were shot in a heap.



Ten were put away in hospital and the rest died of exposure and famine. An amazing tragedy taking place under the eyes of the League of Nations and rewarded by British recognition in the Treaty of Lausanne. . . .

About this time we learnt that Colonel Rawlinson's exchange had not taken place and that he and his small party had returned to their prison. The ghastly disappointment of these men having reached the coast and having then to return has to be endured to be understood.

The snow on our roof was now beginning to melt and water made its way into our dark little room. The sun was happy to watch, and I divided the snow on a distant roof into so many months and watched the weeks go by in that manner. However, it only took three days to melt six months of snow, and as my liberty was still in the vague future I gave up the game and was content to watch shadows and great cloud lumps that floated happily by and looked so peaceful. Besides, the clouds were going westwards and thither lay the sea, which, though generally meaning sea-sickness for me, also spelt Liberty with very large capitals.

Occasionally Maksout or Kemal bought some curdled milk which they let me share, explaining the while how lucky I was to be in the company of such kind-hearted people. This was indeed a luxury and did much to keep us more cheerful. One day we even had some warm milk. I should have preferred it cold, but as it is never drunk other than warm by the Turks I was well content.

Two of the local military officers came in occasionally to see us, and of one of these I begged that he might ask Colonel Rawlinson for a shirt or vest, in fact anything to keep out the cold.

He returned next day and told me Colonel Rawlinson refused to give anything to a spy. This I did not believe and surmised that he had not bothered to ask.

The officers were quite communicative to my companions, but treated me with the utmost reserve.

The "spy" idea had apparently been well driven into them, and when I asked if I could have a trial and be judged one way or the other, I was informed there was no need, as I was already marked as a spy and that was enough.

Kemal relapsed into impenetrable gloom after these visits, interspersed with violent outbursts against Turkey, Mohammedanism and Touranianism. He despised their ignorance and wished they could all be swept away by a tide of Bolshevism.

As I was not yet certain which form of tyranny was the worst, I was not prepared to support his outbursts.

One of the officers spoke very highly of General Townshend, who according to him spent most of his time as a prisoner on parole in Constantinople, while his men were in concentration camps. Thereupon I envied General Townshend, but was surprised he could have done so, since his own men were under such different treatment.

Then this was only a Turkish tale and so unlike the behaviour of an English general that again I did not believe. I gathered they were a little afraid of

Colonel Rawlinson, whom they could not understand and looked upon as rather a wild man.

Every other day I saved a small portion of my bread ration and hid it, at night, under a broken floor-board, hoping, at the end of two weeks, to have a nice little store to consume on Sunday.

With great care, as soon as it was dark, I slipped the small piece out of sight and kept my secret well. On the second Sunday, as soon as dawn appeared and before the others were awake, I groped around and looked for my store.

Alas, the mice had been there before me and nothing remained.

I ate all my bread in future and never trusted a crumb to escape me.

This chapter brings me to somewhere early in the month of May, as far as I can remember, when hunger was really beginning to gnaw, and my hair reached well below where my collar should have been if I had had one.

I had not washed since we left Kars, neither had I taken off my clothes except to destroy the lice and make a thorough search for fleas.

## CHAPTER X

DURING these strange unnatural days, or rather during these strange unnatural nights, many desertions took place amongst the conscripted Kemalist soldiery. The courtyard was daily the scene of hurried instructions to lately arrived *gendarmerie*, who would then leap on their horses and set forth for the hills to find the wretched man who preferred his plot of land to shouldering arms and fighting Lloyd George and Venizelos.

These Turks were very simple-minded, for, once away from the town, they would make straight for their homes and generally find a mounted gendarme awaiting them. They would escape in this manner two or three times and suffer on their return either so many weeks in chains or a public beating as a last resort. There were too few Turks left to shoot all deserters; besides, gendarme ammunition was reserved for Armenians. . . .

One afternoon we noticed a wretched-looking Armenian, emaciated and half dead, being led and almost carried towards the Town Commandant's office by several gendarmes. Our guard told Kemal the prisoner had tried to escape, and had been caught in the hills.

We wondered what would happen to him, and we kept quiet, for the sound of voices began to reach

our ears from the building next door. We heard sharp words; questioning words, but no answer. The voice became louder and sharper. There was a whimper in reply. A blow. . . . A scream. . . . An outburst of curses. Then two or three high-pitched yells and the whimpering continued and great sobs told their story.

We three condemned prisoners looked at each other. We had not much colour in our cheeks, for imagination is quicker than sight. I think the poor fellow was bayoneted. At any rate they carried him out with a sack over his body and he was quite still.

I do not expect anyone bothered much at Geneva. The world still went on. We were still in prison. Sparrows were sitting on the barbed wire outside our window. We did not talk much that evening, but Kemal began to cry. His nerves were in shreds, and no wonder.

Maksout was more disturbed than I had expected. The shadow was coming nearer him and I suppose he felt it.

We asked the sentry what had happened. He said something about a "Christian dog."

We were all obsessed that night by a feeling that we would be bayoneted in our sleep, so we did not have much rest.

I forget what I thought about. . . .

A few mornings after this a little incident took place which shows where one's nerves can lead one if they start to go. Maksout and I were in the window watching a spider secure his fly. The skill and rapidity of the winding process was full of interest.

Kemal, who had been sitting on the floor in the far corner of the room, came over to us. He noticed the spider and quickly knocked the fly out of the web on to the window-sill.

Maksout, annoyed at such interference, hit Kemal on the face, and in a second the two were at each other's throats, cursing, scratching, kicking. Maksout, being the smaller, was soon on the ground and Kemal was apparently preparing to kick him and stamp on his face, when luckily the sentry came in and the fight ceased. I was very thankful, for I had no desire to have to take on Kemal in Maksout's defence, since the former had very long legs and very long nails.

The result of this was that Maksout did not speak to Kemal for a fortnight. I asked Kemal why he had behaved in such a way, and his reply was that the similarity between the fly's position and his own had immediately struck his imagination.

I am afraid this did not stop me from watching the spider, for I found him of the greatest interest, and as a time-passer he and his tricks take a lot of beating.

He had a mate whom he was courting, and his efforts to attract her attention were worthy of similar human endeavours in Piccadilly Circus.

She fell at last, and my joy was forthwith imparted to Maksout, though nothing would make him approach that window again.

Shortly after this Maksout developed dysentery, but they refused to give him medical treatment and he must have suffered considerably.



This was caused as much as anything by the bread, which, if analysed, would probably have produced the germs of most of the known intestinal diseases.

As regards the "literature" on our walls, there was none, so Kemal and I wrote many things to pass away the time. One thing I wrote I give here for what it is worth, simply because it shows how a prisoner's mind is always concentrated on freedom. It had no name, but it stuck in my memory and I wrote it down on my arrival in Constantinople.

May God be willing I return  
 When snow once more shall sleep  
 Upon the heart of England's fields  
 With purity; and keep  
 Earth's lovely bosom warm and soft till Spring  
 Arrive and little birds once more do sing.

Not then? Ah, cruel prison walls . . .  
 Perchance I shall return  
 When modest flowers are born to gaze  
 One moment, each in turn,  
 Upon the things God gave us that I know  
 And love so well, so well :—then fade and go.

Not then? Have mercy on me, Lord.  
 Perchance I shall return  
 When russet leaves from golden trees  
 Give colour forth midst fern  
 And moss; and all my little birds have flown  
 And Nature, wild and bleak, is all alone,

If it be this poor shrunk body  
 Must find a lonely grave  
 In this wild land. My spirit, fly  
 Away, away and crave,  
 When, blended into one, come death and birth,  
 Sweet peace for one who knew it not on earth.

I forget what other things one wrote. They were chiefly quotations; one or two of Verlaine's

shorter poems and parts of the "Ballad of Reading Gaol."

"Après les nuages vient le soleil; les beaux jours reviendront," appealed greatly to Kemal, who repeated it hundreds of times a day. Maksout wrote nothing but the Communist slogan in Turkish, and only once, to show Kemal that he could write, which accomplishment, previously doubted, was now acknowledged. In different places on the walls I wrote out a calendar with the numbers fairly widely spaced. Around it I wrote the months, and many times during the day would one of us, with closed eyes, dab our stub end of pencil at this calendar and thereby decide the month and date of our release.

This developed into several variations and we jabbed our pencils at "this year," "next year," "some time" or "never," and the more we hit on the last prophecy the more we played our little game. Which shows, of course, how full of hope we really were in spite of adverse circumstances.

The outcome of this was a brilliant success, for I started to cut out of match-boxes little squares of thin wood on which I drew strange devices. Twenty-five of these I made, and used them as a pack of cards. Each square was only the size of one's little finger-nail, and the devices thereon were hard to make out. As far as I remember the pack consisted of a man and woman, a death's head, prison bars, a ship, a horseshoe, a dagger for danger, a dog (friend) for loyalty, a serpent for malice, a lifebuoy for safety, a divided card of sun and shadow, an anchor for hope, a heart, money-bags, a dove for

peace, a letter, a sun for comfort, a cat for slander, a crown for honours, a sword for war, a house for domesticity, a bird for joy, a laurel wreath for success, a cap of liberty for freedom, a pair of scales for justice. The remaining ones I have forgotten. With these cards, placing the man in the middle, I proceeded to tell the fortunes of my fellow-prisoners and myself. One row of five; then another. The man in the middle of the next five and two more rows of five beneath him.

According to what cards surrounded the man, thus would be his immediate future.

Whether one believes in card-telling or not, it is interesting to recall that whereas the ship and cap of liberty were invariably near me and never far from Kemal, Maksout's cards were generally very bad.

One assortment that came up for Maksout could not have been worse. Over his head the skull of death, on his right the dagger of danger, on his left the dark cloud; below him the prison bars, whilst the diagonal spaces were filled by the cat, serpent, scales and sword.

I would sometimes have to tell Kemal's fortune six or seven times running and never less than twenty times a day.

He would then borrow the cards and tell them himself, and if I were not paying attention, alter them favourably and point to them with great joy, believing in his self-propheesied good fortune.

When I told my own fortune the horseshoe always lay next door to the death's head, so I was quite

content to believe it either meant it would be lucky to die or luck would prevent my dying.

As the days and weeks went by we all three began to look on death as a very pleasant relief, provided the deed was done quickly. Kemal alone of us three jibbed slightly at the idea and was unable to accept the Mohammedan belief of a future life to be lived like a Sultan.

Maksout believed in nothing; he took death as the end of an incomprehensible existence; as if God, having created us, was incapable of suggesting future developments and therefore abolished His handiwork as though it were too much trouble to allow it to continue.

I spent much time in telling them both of the psychological aspect of death and the beliefs of such men as Maeterlinck, Sir Oliver Lodge, Sir William Crookes, and others.

It reminded me of the difficulties of the early African missionaries, for no sooner had I finished a most convincing argument than Maksout would say, "That is not true, because there is no God." Kemal was certain there was one, but he gave one to imagine he believed Him to live in the United States because everyone was happy there and everyone had money.

Kemal's commercial instinct was very marked, for one day he began to make plans for exporting honey and eggs from Anatolia to Europe, working out on the walls how much profit he could make.

When he had exhausted this idea I suggested he should open a Turkish "khan" in London and sell coffee and Turkish cakes.

This idea afforded him great joy, and for days he lived in a world of his own wherein he was making thousands of English piastres at this particular occupation. He then thought it best to amalgamate his two ideas; grow his own coffee, keep his own bees and poultry, and then export to a shop in Paris and one in London.

Thereupon six square inches of wall were made purple by his calculations, and finally he decided he could make three thousand Turkish pounds a year in this manner.

He then wished his fortune told in order to find out whether he would do well financially at this trade, and when the money-bags turned up near him (about the fifth time), his happiness was complete.

Maksout only became interesting when he spoke of Kurdistan. I remember he told how he had visited the Mountain of Youth and seen the strange high-placed cave wherein lie two old men, whole and natural-coloured, though unembalmed, who have been dead for hundreds of years. They are treated with great reverence and gifts are placed in the cave for them. This mountain lies somewhere in the province of Hakkari, and the story has been vouched for by a friend of mine, General Agha Petros of Bas, who commanded the Assyrian forces during the 1914-1918 war.

Probably there are English people who have seen this sight, which must rank as one of the wonders of the world. One naturally concludes that the rocks give forth some sort of gas that preserves human flesh, but I have never heard the real explanation of

this phenomenon. Maksout seemed to know a great deal of English intrigue among the Kurds, which, I gathered, he had learnt from the Bolsheviks, and it was to combat this that he had been sent from Baku.

Outside in the courtyard there were occasionally interesting things to watch.

One day I well remember a squad of soldiers parading before a young subaltern. One poor ragged wretch was excessively clumsy and was immediately cuffed on the head. Thereupon he dropped his rifle and made for the gateway, the officer pursuing. He was soon overtaken and proceeded to make a stumbling retreat round the courtyard, receiving a further buffet at every step; the officer's right and left arms working like windmills.

There was also a great parade in honour of the Sultan's birthday, when the regimental colours were carried and speeches delivered on the kindness of their ruler and the genius of Mustapha Kemal Pasha. I was very interested to see a parade of this kind, since I had imagined "Kemalia" or Turkey of 1921 to be very republican; but I was premature, and have since learnt that, Sultan or no Sultan, Turkey would never be republican at heart till her Pasha-system is broken and her peasants educated by others than "Mullahs."

Three times we witnessed a "beating parade," which I will try to describe.

A carpet is brought forth and laid on the ground and the battalion formed up all round it. In the centre stands the Town Commandant, who was also the O.C. the garrison troops, and his adjutant. Two



sergeant-majors stand facing each other on either side of the carpet. In the square stands an "asker" with a bundle of long wooden sticks, and the prisoners in chains stand behind the carpet guarded closely.

An impassioned speech is then made by the O.C. on the wickedness of desertion and the fury of Mohammed to see how cowardly are his children. The first wretched man is then laid face down on the carpet. The two sergeant-majors, armed with sticks, then kneel on one knee and proceed alternately to beat the man on his backside, never, however, raising the arms above the shoulder. After the man has been fairly warmed up the O.C. begins to count, and generally at about "Yirmi bir" (twenty-one) the poor devil starts screaming.

At "otuz" (thirty) the O.C. generally lets him off, especially if the man yells very much.

I noticed how much less a man was beaten if he started screaming at the first blow. These men had probably learnt the best way from experience. Kemal was disgusted at the moderation of the beating, and told us that in Constantinople a band was always in attendance whose sole duty was to drown the cries of the prisoner. Certainly, to me, the blows did not compare with those of an ordinary public school beating, though I imagined the worst part to be watching the carpet-laying and listening to the O.C.'s speech.

Two other things of interest happened during the month of May or June. One was the wedding of one of the subalterns, which was accompanied by great rejoicing on the part of all except us.



THE AUTHOR

Taken in Constantinople on his release, as a passport photo.  
(Notice the Armenian letter "H" on the shoulder-strap, for Haïstan.)

[To face p. 216.]



The other was an earthquake, which the inhabitants of Erzeroum are well used to.

There were three distinct shocks that made our building sway in an alarming manner.

At the first shock, which lasted about twenty seconds, I hoped and prayed that the building might fall and we could then have a chance of escape.

At the second shock, which lasted longer, I stood up awaiting results, and at the last I was prepared to make for the door any second.

But again it was only a new experience that seemed to say, "There you are, you never thought of this way of escape, did you now? There won't be any more just yet, but it will give you something to think about."

And anything, at that time, to THINK about would have been a godsend. Of all experiences in prison the constant repetition of the same thoughts is the worst. There is nothing to take one's mind off the position one is in. Killing lice and flies passes but an hour, scribbling on the walls but another.

Telling fortunes and talking—and then nothing.

I wrote up R. L. S.'s "Requiem" and translated it to Kemal. He was very fond of this and used to ask me to say it to him almost every day.

I recited Shakespeare to myself and thanked God I had committed many passages to memory in the past; but even then I found my mind was not well in health.

With Kemal crying his heart out and Maksout in the depths of despair, I prayed earnestly for a book or paper to write on, in fact anything to prevent me

going out of my mind; for this, I feared, would happen, since I had been now nearly three months in this one room with nothing to do.

Lying awake at night I felt as if I could scream and scream, the silence outside and the sobbing of Kemal being so terrible. Kemal's fits of hysteria were luckily not continuous, but as weeks went by he became more silent, and sometimes never spoke to either of us for three or four days.

Maksout would then come and sit by me on the floor to keep warm and say, "I feel I shall die soon unless I can escape."

I told him escape was impossible, but he shook his head.

Kemal's sleep was often punctuated with outbursts of Russian, which took the form of calling on the Bolsheviks to kill their enemies. Then again would often come to him the memory of the massacre he escaped, and I could hear him saying "shashka" and "ras, dva, tre," which is the "one, two, three" that the Cossack shouts as he plies his sword.

My dreams were often of water, rushing, whirling, deep black water in which I floundered. I hated sleeping, for I knew I should see the water again and a long dark bridge on which stood hundreds of people who pointed under the arch. I never reached that arch, and I am thankful I did not, for it was evil and black and it looked as if a whirlpool circled its way underneath.

All this time the stages of hunger had developed.

By this I mean that hunger is a process of "slowing down," and can be divided into weeks, viz.—

First week : No effect.

Second week : Interest in the time of arrival of food.

Third week : Hunger.

Fourth week : Ravenous.

Fifth week : It seems as if the whole system drops. Hunger lessens.

Sixth week : Becoming used to it.

Seventh week : Another drop.

Eighth week : Low internal vitality.

Ninth week and onward : Dull, lifeless longing for a piece of white bread, which seems to mean the height of edible luxury.

The fourth week is worst. It was about that time that we used to wet our finger-tips and pick up the crumbs that had fallen. Mostly a mixture of dust and chaff, but we all did it, and looked very weird the while.

Mortar from the bricks by the window and plaster from the walls tasted much the same, and bits of wood from the doorpost were good to suck. The cracks in the floor-boards held strange things, and as we could not divide the crumbs from the dirt we made a *compôte* of it and ate indiscriminately.

It was towards the end of May that an answer came to my prayer for something to occupy my mind. It came, at night, in the shape of a dream.

I dreamt that I and three of my war-time friends had landed on a beautiful wild island and were starting to explore.

We walked the northern coast and made out a high range of hills to the south which appeared to



divide the island into two. We walked towards these hills and camped at the base, and there, looking over a long tropically green valley, which we named "Avalon," we decided to found a new country.

Then I woke.

The island henceforward became a reality and night and day I began to play with the idea.

We mapped it out. I sent for other of my friends who were expert in different matters, and they came and we planned the future.

We divided the island into three provinces and we imported further of my friends and settled them on farms. We built three towns, one for each province, and appointed governors. We discovered gold and silver and copper. We grew wheat, oats, maize, coffee, cotton and fruit, and on the highlands we reared cattle and sheep.

Every man that came was made to join a special Trade Union based on the old spirit of the Craftsmen's Guilds. We forbade large industries and factories, and worked everything by electricity. The mining was state-owned and all else was done by the Guilds, of which the biggest went by the name of the "Handy Jacks." We had Masonic Lodges and Buffalo Lodges and held no class distinction. We introduced a national dress and equal education for all. We organised a force of *gendarm-erie* and our worst punishment was deportation. Immigration was strictly limited, and art and religion were the greatest of occupations. We had state theatres and state opera, and over all these I placed a man I knew who was an expert.

All disputes were first of all brought before the Guilds and then, if need be, before the country's law officers. No raw spirits were allowed, but wine was much drunk and made from our own grapes.

Co-operative stores, bakeries and dairies were instituted. No person could possess more than two thousand a year and no person less than one hundred. No motor-cars were allowed. An electric railway served the island well and horses were the means of transport. No birds could be shot save those that spoil the crops, but there was good hunting in the hills for lions and leopards.

Fishing became a great industry.

Later we were raided by certain savage islanders from near by, and a whole day was spent in mentally conducting the operations, step by step, which led to their defeat.

Each day I arranged a programme of direction and organisation, so that after about a week I almost ceased to realise I was in prison, so plain was my island in my mental vision, so clearly did I see the people to whom I talked in spirit.

Thus then did God use my mind and take me away from the eternal brooding on my miserable state.

Kemal himself was also much relieved by being able to live in his dream of future commercial prosperity. For all prisoners who fear the loss of memory and of mental faculties I confidently recommend a dream island wherein they are supreme.

For those who are Conservatives I can suggest an island bristling with guns, public schools, tariff reform, wealth and poverty.

For those who are Liberals I can suggest a teetotal island based on Free Trade, taxation of land values and nonconformity.

For those who are Socialists I give them my island and hope they will improve on it, though I must insist that savage raiders be repelled by force if conferences and red flags are unintelligible to them.

One evening, when Kemal was asleep, Maksout came to me and said he had a plan of escape.

It was for him and me alone, and Kemal must not be told, since he could not be trusted in his present state. With this I agreed.

The plan was to lower ourselves from one of the windows, and by walking along the roof of the barracks, that lay at right angles to our building, reach the road outside. This might have been possible. We would then have to make our way out of the town and set off for the hills. We could then make for Kurdistan, where we should be safe.

The plan was, of course, hopeless. We did not know the town and the nearest Kurdish tribes were over a hundred miles away. No food for a hundred miles, the certainty of immediate death if we were caught, the lack of knowledge of direction and the uncertainty of the loyalty of the Kurdish tribesmen to Mustapha Kemal.

I was not enthusiastic, though I promised to help Maksout if he decided to escape.

For two or three days Maksout tended his plan and enlarged it, but it never materialised, and personally I was far too cowardly to attempt escape, since I was certain it would only be a matter of time

before we were all executed, and then no one would ever know about us.

I had become by this time so physically and mentally wretched that I looked forward to death, always provided it was by shooting and not by the bayonet.

Mohammedanism celebrated its "Ramadhan" about this time and we were given a bowl of soup after sundown in honour of it.

It was a trying time, for our bread ration was no longer issued at the usual morning hour, and we had to wait a whole day before it came.

The last time I had celebrated this particular feast had been in the desert of Algeria under very happy circumstances, and I thought bitterly of the difference.

There in Algeria was liberty, warmth, food. . . .

Mohammedan prisoners and even private soldiers must have cursed their religion in Erzeroum when they had to wait about forty-five hours, on the first day of Ramadhan, for their food.

Every evening the call to prayer came to us from the town, and during the feast a "muedthin" called as well from the courtyard outside. But this call in cold, unhappy Turkey had none of the glamour of Tunis, Cairo or Zanzibar about it, and I wondered how certain writers of popular "desert" literature would have fared had their knowledge of Mohammedanism been derived from Turkey, instead of Biskra or Woking Mosque.

Mohammedanism in Turkey is still strong and the teetotalism is infinitely more observed than in Algeria or even Egypt, chiefly because there has been so little Western influence.

In Algeria, with its military service principle, wine-drinking became very common during the war, and the habit seems to have spread to post-war recruits.

But all this is only a diversion. Suffice it to say that the celebration of a foreign religion, in spite of the soup, was another push down the road that leads to the wreck of a prisoner's life.

The thing in prison that did give real joy was watching the sunsets and counting the shades of colour than ran to and fro over the Erzeroum hills.

Noticing the reflections from the sun that lay behind us, which were dimmed by distance and reflected from the hills to us by special favour.

Watching a hard black shadow between two spurs gradually become less sullen and receive new birth by a slow influx of delicious pink.

Seeing green being turned to blue and faint yellow streaks becoming orange. . . .

All these things were good to see.

And later, above the hills, cloud formations came and went. Great blue lagoons separated themselves out before my eyes, leaving little coral islands behind in their midst as they swelled and swelled till they reached a new-found shore of a darker or redder colour.

And on this shore were myriads of people watching, as for a ship that never came, till finally they were put to flight by a bush-fire that started near the shore and gradually consumed the whole island, and with it my evening pleasure.

I never remember such skies even in Africa; per-

haps because here in prison the contrast was more striking.

Again I remember a great dark sea, rich with indignation, hurling itself against innumerable rocks till at last, in despair, the rocks vanished and refused to play for my benefit, as I felt all this to be.

Then, tired of seas and shores, a giant would emerge, lying snoring on his back till a great blue dragon with pink scales and a golden tail would eat him up and rush off behind a black cloud to digest or chew the cud—whichever dragons do.

Armies with banners flying would march slowly along and be met by puffs of cloud that would scatter them as effectively as H.E.

Bears, signifying Russia, would appear and engage in mortal combat with dragons, signifying China, which was, of course, exactly what was happening in Mongolia, only I did not know it.

Mountains rose up with mists on them like Kili-manjaro, and up these would gallop a rider like the knight who went to find the princess on the glass mountain.

Trees and boulders, men and seas, lakes and fires, giants and beasts, all were to be found for my special delectation: all in the clouds.

Wonderful clouds of Erzeroum that helped so much. . . .

At the beginning of June, Maksout offered me a Turkish pound for my Caucasian silver belt, and this I parted with and bought curdled milk with the proceeds, which we all shared.

In view of what happened I have since regretted



the loss of this belt, which I had originally bought from Kemal. It was studded with silver nails and bosses all worked in the unique Caucasian style, and in silver alone would have been worth a good deal more than I gave for it.

My breeches I now kept up with string, which I pulled out of a sandbag that lay by the latrine. It was not particularly strong and soon began to look like a "tisbeh,"<sup>1</sup> becoming very full of knots.

About this time, in telling Maksout's fortune with my little match-box cards, everything came out as black as possible for him, and finally I refused to tell him any more.

Kemal then took over the cards and the same thing used to happen.

After this a shadow of approaching calamity seemed to spread over us. We felt things were coming to an issue. We felt that the end was near, and I, personally, prayed that it might be quick.

The snow had nearly gone from the hills and our sparrows had ceased to visit us. The weather was getting warmer, I remember—and then the blow fell.

It was on a Sunday, about the 12th of June, very early in the morning, that I woke to see Kemal and Maksout in earnest conversation at the window.

As I woke they beckoned to me, and I rose and went across. They pointed to the courtyard.

Down below I saw a party of about twenty

<sup>1</sup> String of beads carried by men in Caucasia, Anatolia and the Levant, but of no religious meaning.

gendarmes standing by their horses and much coming and going of officers and men.

Maksout and Kemal's simultaneous question was simply, "Why?"

I imagined that it was some affair with deserters or perhaps a mutiny, and as I knew the gendarmes to be a fine body of men and very well disciplined, I thought they had been called in to keep the peace.

Maksout did not think so, but offered no explanation. Kemal sat on the floor, his head in his hands.

An hour passed in silence.

Soon after a sergeant came into the room and asked for Maksout. Maksout rose. The sergeant said :

"The Town Commandant wishes to see you."

"Shall I bring my bundle?"

"No." And Maksout followed the N.C.O.

Kemal never stirred. I watched Maksout from the window.

He passed through the gateway of the headquarter office, followed by the gendarmes, his little figure bowed by reason of his loss of strength.

I could see no more. I listened intently, and some ten minutes later a faint volley reached my ears.

I left the window at once, and realising Kemal had not heard what I had, decided to say nothing about it.

Thus Maksout, our little kindly friend of many months, met his death as a deserter and paid Bolshevik spy.

I decided they were not going to shoot me to-day and asked our guard about it. He replied that Kemal

would be shot in two days' time and I two days after that.

I was long past minding and only hoped I could go to my end as bravely as Maksout had done.

An hour later Kemal raised his head.

"Why hasn't Maksout come back?" he asked.

"I don't know," I replied.

"He's dead. They've killed him," he almost screamed. "Ah, poor Maksout, wallahi, wallahi," and he began to sob, rocking himself backwards and forwards.

Suddenly the door opened and my heart seemed to stop beating. Into the room came an officer and a Mullah.

They moved across to where Maksout had slept and began to make a bundle of his things.

Kemal threw himself on his knees before the priest and begged him to tell him where Maksout was.

"Is he shot?" pleaded Kemal.

The Mullah looked down at him and never moved a muscle of his face.

"Is he shot? Tell me, tell me, for the love of Allah."

"We do not do such things in Turkey. He is very well."

And I wondered why the Mullah need have lied.

Kemal, still sobbing, clung to the Mullah's skirts, but was pushed on the floor by the holy man, and the two intruders left with Maksout's bundle and the belt I had lately sold him.

Kemal lay on the floor and wept, calling between

his tears, "Oh, Maksout, brother Maksout, little Maksout, what have they done to you?"

The day, a terrible day, passed in silence.

In the evening, as I once more watched the clouds, my eyes involuntarily sought the corner Maksout used to occupy and I was sad at heart.

I opened the neck of my Russian shirt to the evening breeze, and in doing so my hand encountered the opal I had worn for so long.

A strange impulse made me unfasten the clasp and take it from my neck for the first time for five years.

"You are meant to be an unlucky stone," I thought, "and although you have preserved me in war and other dangers, I will put you in my pocket, and if I am released I shall know that you bring sorrow after success."

So I took off my opal on the night of Maksout's death and put it in my pocket.

That night and subsequent days Kemal's hysteria was terrible to witness. I spoke to him of God and the next world and of what a release death would be to us in our present state. I nursed him in my arms.

I humoured him and joked to him, but all to no avail. He would listen sometimes like a child and then break off with:

"Yes, yes, but Maksout is gone. There is no God. He could never allow such things to be. There is no God."

And then he would sleep and wake up again and shiver till his teeth rattled.

The ensuing days he was much the same and hardly ever spoke.

Every step on the stairs made us start and we expected to hear a voice say :

“ The Town Commandant wishes to see you.”

But the Town Commandant did not wish to see us.

At least, not yet.

## CHAPTER XI

It was about four days after Maksout's death that the next event of interest took place.

A sunny warm afternoon it was, and great coming and going was taking place in the courtyard.

At length our door opened and the same sergeant appeared.

"The Englishman?" he asked.

I came to him.

"The Town Commandant wishes to see you."

I followed him.

Down the steps, through the archway and up to the Town Commandant's room.

In here at a table sat the Town Commandant and his be-jewelled adjutant.

The latter spoke.

"You are going to Trebizond."

I made no reply.

"You need not be frightened. You are being sent home to England."

What was there to say?

"Don't you believe it?"

"No."

"Wallahi, it is true. This very evening you will leave in a carriage."

"Colonel Rawlinson went to Trebizond and came back."



"But this is different, it is all arranged."

I still disbelieved.

"Prepare to leave. There will be another Englishman with you. You will be quite safe. Nothing shall happen to you."

He did not offer me a cigarette, so I began to believe him. Anyway I returned to Kemal and told him.

"What did I tell you? They will not kill you here because the English Colonel would hear. They will kill you away in the hills where no one will know. Poor Maksout, poor Baldwin! And what will they do to me?" And he broke down again. I felt what he had said to be true, but I was past caring.

Half an hour later a tall man dressed in khaki, with a bundle on his back, was let into our room, and I recognised the A.S.C. driver Mahoney I had met at Alexandropol.

He told me how he had been retaken and sent back to Erzeroum. He told me how he had joined his former comrades. How Colonel Rawlinson would not speak to him because he told the Turks the whereabouts of certain motor-car parts, and how suddenly, after being asked whether he were really an Irishman, he had been told to join me and go to Trebizond and thence to Constantinople. We talked a lot. The first words of English I had heard since Alexandropol except for the strange gabbling of the Americanised "asker."

Just as twilight was setting in a tall sergeant-major whom I had never seen before entered and bade us follow.

Kemal, who had just previously given me a note for

his uncle in Stamboul which I had hidden in my "papach," embraced me and then turned away, and that was the last I saw of him, save his sad handsome face watching our departure from the window as I turned round on my way across the courtyard.

As Mahoney had no shoes but Turkish slippers, I lent him my Russian snow-boots, and so, as regards luggage, I was without any encumbrances.

We spent a quarter of an hour in the sergeant-major's room while he had a meal of cheese and radishes, and then clambered into an old brakeless four-wheeler which looked as if it had just come off the London streets, except that it was drawn by two horses instead of one.

We rattled along in the dark, whilst Mahoney kept up a flowing conversation with the sergeant-major in Turkish. We passed through the town gates and were soon in the open country.

I thought of Shura and then of Kemal, and then began to wonder how far from Erzeroum I should meet my end.

Some twelve miles we covered in this way, and finally stopped in front of a lonely "khan," where we descended and were welcomed quite affably by the host. Here we drank coffee and ate proper Turkish bread, and it was indeed good and wonderful.

Many visitors looked in and seemed very inquisitive about us.

Eventually the "khan" closed for the night, and we lay down on the raised stage which surrounds all such places. About eight or nine of us were there in all, and sleep came to me after much weary thinking.

Early the next morning, during that peculiar state which lies midway between waking and sleeping, I became conscious of the morning light stealing into the little "khan" and casting shadows behind the sleeping inmates.

At the same time I remember being distinctly conscious of having my head couched in the lap of someone I instinctively felt to be too wonderful for this earth. Over all my being there was a feeling of extreme peace and utmost security.

For about a minute I lay enchanted and then, on turning to view my comforter, my head appeared to sink and rest once more on my pillow of boots and "papach."

This experience gave me great mental relief and spiritual help. Some ten minutes later I rose, put on my "sapagui" and left the "khan" to watch a Turkish morning under an open sky.

Camels were journeying along the road and their bells tinkled clearly in the silent morning. I stretched myself luxuriously. It all seemed too good to be true.

About an hour later we proceeded on our journey. We were still in the great plain of Erzeroum, and for miles around there was no sign of habitation or cultivation.

Here and there a ruined, burnt-out building.

"Look," said the sergeant-major, "that is what the Armenians did in 1915."

When one compared a few, or even a thousand ruined Turkish homes with the thousands and hundreds of thousands of Armenian women and children massacred

by the Turks, one did not feel inclined to sympathise overmuch with the sergeant-major. After a time I began to see the extraordinary humour of three weirdly dressed men (two of them very weird-looking) rolling along sedately in a two-horse brougham with no brakes. I emphasise the lack of brakes, because rarely have I been so frightened as when later on we started off down a mountain pass at an uncontrollable speed, rolling and jolting from side to side, expecting every minute to be dashed to pieces over the side.

The weirdness of our clothing had better be described.

Mahoney, clean-shaven but with straggly hair, wearing an old service dress cap, a huge leather and wool A.S.C. driver's coat and my grey and red felt snow-boots.

Myself, bearded, hair to my shoulders, wearing a "papach," Russian shirt, khaki overcoat, a pair of Guards' plus-fours and Russian "sapagui."

Alone, the sergeant-major was smartly dressed; for even the driver wore patched trousers, raw-hide slippers, and German infantry jacket and a Turkish woollen helmet.

In the late afternoon we pulled up at Kodjapounar, and had a cup of coffee in the "khan."

I think the Turks here must have taken me for a priest of great devoutness, for they were excessively polite and humble and gave me coffee and bread of their own.

We spent the evening talking. At least I did very little, for my knowledge of Turkish was very small. Nevertheless Mahoney translated if any remarks were

addressed to me. Mahoney and I sat on a balcony and watched the little market below doing its evening trade.

Sheep's head seemed to be a popular purchase, whilst goat cheese, curdled milk and coffee were bought continuously.

We slept in the "khan," and slept well. In the early morning I walked down the little street, before the others were awake, towards the river that ran in many channels along a gravelled bed.

Here I took off all my clothes and bathed, and later spent a quarter of an hour amongst the seams, with good results. I looked forward to a less irritating day in consequence. The water was cold but invigorating, and it rushed over its shallow bed with considerable speed, thereby, when lying flat in its course, giving to the body the feeling of aquatic massage.

I returned to the "khan," wondering whether the sergeant-major had noticed my absence, but, if he had, he made no remark. We started off shortly afterwards amidst the glory of a summer's morning.

We had not gone far before we met a covered wagon with two officers carrying rifles walking at the side. I immediately recognised one of the officers as the one who had recently been married in Erzeroum. He was apparently returning from his honeymoon. He told our sergeant-major that robbers had been reported in the neighbouring hills, but so far they had had no trouble. He seemed surprised to see me apparently on my way to liberty, but did not say anything to me.

We then began to climb on to a high table-land where there seemed to be a certain amount of cultivation. The soil here was very red and appeared to contain iron in considerable quantities, but all untouched, unworked. At a small *gendarmerie* post we came on a batch of Armenian prisoners who were constructing a light railway. These poor creatures took off their headgear (such as it was) when we passed and held out their hands for food. I had nothing to give them and, in my impotency, felt like the Marquis in the *Tale of Two Cities*, who drove by in his coach while his miserable tenants took off their bonnets to him and he heeded them not.

The sergeant-major said something about "Christian dogs," and was entirely unmoved by pity.

Mahoney was more used to seeing them than I was. I merely wondered why they did not try to escape and thereby court a bullet within the first quarter-mile.

The next halting-place, which must have been Masal, has completely gone from my mind, but in working out the distances I feel we must have spent a night between Kodjapounar and Baibourt.

Therefore let me simply say that Masal was the place, and that we moved on again the next morning, with the weather still as glorious as before and freedom coming larger into sight.

It must have been at Masal that we met with a party of Turks who were walking to Trebizond, some making their first journey Mecca-wards, others on business, others to see relatives.

These people continued with us all the way and were a very agreeable crowd of men.



The next afternoon we reached the little town of Baibourt, perched on a hill, surrounded by pine trees and mountain scenery, with an architecture that recalled Switzerland. The "khan" was much bigger than the other ones and very much frequented.

Here I spoke at length to a Turkish officer who knew German, and had been with Von Saunders during the 1914-1918 war. He had managed to escape from Constantinople and join the Kemalist forces, and was now in charge of a company in Baibourt.

In this "khan" I was offered a cup of coffee by an old Turk, and Mahoney told me his offering was in gratitude for the way his son had been treated when an English prisoner in Mesopotamia. The old man added that he was sorry his country did not treat her prisoners as well.

This was gratifying to hear, and supported my belief that the poor Turks are infinitely finer characters than the great Beys and Pashas, being much kinder-hearted and lacking the artificiality of their so-called betters.

Next to Spain, Turkey is easily the most feudal country in Europe and the Near East, though, because of the size of the country, the peasant population of Turkey have a wider scope and do not depend so directly on the will of their Pashas, save in times of war or military law.

On the other hand, they are more subservient, since the Mullahs have managed to conjure up a greater purgatory for their future than ever the priests of Rome did for their Spanish flock with their fiery furnaces and inquisitions. Much talk went on in the "khan," and the night was well on its way before

we curled ourselves up on the rush carpets and slept.

The way out of Baibourt was very glorious as we climbed and descended again. Before us there rose a great chain of hills that seemed impassable, but here again we thanked the Russians for the excellent, though spiral, road we travelled on. Up this hill Mahoney and I walked, and joined the little band of wayfarers we had met the day before.

The sun shone on us magnificently and the view from the top of this great hill was tremendous in its expanse. Row after row of mountain and hill, like the waves of a great sea, and the whole without a sign of habitation or cultivation.

In its vastness it was very sad, and I thought with wonder of the courage of Xenophon and his Greeks who had sought the sea along this same way, hoping vainly that the summit of the next mountain would give them the sight they longed for above all others.

Down the other side we walked, jumping streamlets and climbing again with the aid of shrubs and small trees. Finally before us rose the greatest of the mountain ranges, and I knew it to be the Pontic chain. It seemed terribly high; yet the sky, shimmering blue, rose above it and brought the terror of great heights into our minds.

We rested, looking over a great valley, till the carriage arrived, for we had long outstepped it by our short cuts.

Among the walkers was one I spoke to in the strange language of people who are determined to talk, and his steps were bent towards Mecca.

It has since struck me how much one can understand and how satisfactorily one can talk in an unknown language when necessity arises.

Half-way up the Pontic chain, in a colder atmosphere than we had encountered before, we came to rest in a little village nestling in a mountain pass, just beyond Khart. A prosperous village this was, for all travellers from and to Trebizond, passed through it.

Mahoney had sold his overcoat some time previously and he urged me to sell mine.

I was loath to do this, since I still felt we might return from Trebizond as Colonel Rawlinson had done, and then I should badly need it for the autumn and winter. However, so tempting did the little baker's shop look, that I parted with my coat for a Turkish lira. With this we bought Turkish bread, goat cheese and coffee.

I felt excessively rich.

We slept well from physical tiredness and I awoke early to watch the dawn.

It was chilly outside the "khan" and the village was asleep. Down the pass came the tinkle of camel bells, and soon the soft-treading, wistful-looking ships of the desert came through the darkness, carrying their loads of petrol tins which they would probably have to take to Erzeroum. There were some hundred camels in this convoy and all were well cared for.

It is probably not generally known that the camel is used all over Turkey, and is often seen in North Persia, Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Anyway when I first saw them in Armenia it struck me with amazement. . . .



LIEUT.-COLONEL A. CHACHATOUNI  
Commandant of Erivan.

[To face p. 240.



The sunrise was superb, but spoilt by too many hills, making black shadows rather than blue, gold fingers on the hills rather than pink.

I must have spent two or three hours strolling round the village before the others awoke, but the sense of freedom was sweet and to be enjoyed alone.

We started off once more, walking by preference, and it was this day above all during our glorious travel that was most memorable.

On the further side of the Pontic chain there was a mass of wild flowers, and among them a preponderance of scarlet pimpernels. In walking our feet sank in colour, and my joy was increased by finding a love of flowers shared by all our fellow-travellers, who picked them and put them in their turbans or on their jackets.

I looked, with pleasure that I was not riding, at the tortuous descent of our carriage, for the speed at which it descended was asking for the trouble it did not receive. Whether this was due to the sergeant-major, who had taken the reins from the driver, or to the horses, I am not prepared to say, but we imagined he was trying to make up time for that which he lost on each climb.

Numerous waterfalls jumped merrily down the hills, and we bathed our faces in these, for the day became hotter as we walked.

Mahoney's big felt snow-shoes must have been very trying to walk in, but as he had nothing else he had to suffer, which he did in an Irish silence, which, as everyone knows, is twenty-five minutes' pained expression and five minutes' "O Lorrđ," and "These



are terrible awful boots, b' Jaisus." At the very bottom of the mountains the road began to run through a long level valley, and here we said good-bye to our fellow-travellers and entered the carriage. We did not see them again until we reached Trebizond, where they arrived a day after us.

The river Djorokh must have been crossed by us before we came to our last resting-place, but I seem to forget all about it.

Nevertheless another river appeared as we were journeying along this valley, and this led us to a fair-sized town that was shaded by willows and poplars.

Here the "khan" was very smart and newly painted, being kept by an ex-sergeant-major who had just left the army. At an adjoining "khan" there was even an orchestra, and I began to feel a wave of Europe stealing over me.

A great many of the houses were built in modern Greek style, and therefore I was not surprised to notice several Greeks<sup>1</sup> walking about.

During the evening I wandered the streets and came upon a store of small-arms ammunition and a few boxes of trench-mortar shells; the former were English make, the latter German. There were no troops in the town, but this small stock was guarded by *gendarmes*, who did not appear to mind who took it, since they spent most of their time in the "khan," listening to the orchestra of three Greeks dressed in faded and threadbare dinner jackets and whitish shirts.

<sup>1</sup> A year later these Greeks were either deported or driven into the interior and massacred.

We slept, and in the morning during my customary inspection I chanced on a baker baking bread and cakes. One thing he was baking intrigued me greatly. First he slapped the dough out thin and flat with his hand and then cut it into circles of about eight inches in diameter. The edges of these he turned up and emptied the contents of an uncooked egg into the centre of these circles. Then the whole thing was put in the oven.

As soon as they were cooked they were sold: Turks coming along every second ready to receive their breakfast as if they had been trained to do it to the second all their lives.

This looked too good to miss, and as I still had money from the sale of my overcoat I bought one for Mahoney and one for myself. Indeed they were most excellent, and I am sure if only there had been a rasher of bacon placed under the egg, a better breakfast could not be imagined.

On our way out of the town we passed several more stores of ammunition; all, apparently, unguarded.

We then set forth on a straight, narrow road, flanked by grazing land, unspoilt by man or beast.

Round behind a large boulder we saw three eagles: father, mother and baby; the first two standing four foot high and gazing at us with an air of mingled scorn and surprise.

The rattle of our aged wheels disconcerted them somewhat and they hurriedly flew off.

This was a laborious business, for before they could rise on the wind they had to make five or six heavy

leaps and then continue flying a foot or so off the ground till they had raised sufficient impetus to rise.

Baby eagle, after hopping seven or eight times, collapsed on its nose; but with amazing sense hopped back to where it had started, continued towards the boulder, leapt upon this, and, once on the top, volplaned down, rising again when close to the earth and following its parents.

This showed its usual method of departure and proved that its efforts in imitating its parents were merely caused by sudden fright or a desire to show off.

Through a glorious series of ravines, by many streams, over-towered by high cliffs, our little brougham rattled on. We began to see more people and even came on a party of men repairing telegraph wires. We passed a field or two of wheat and grazing land covered with poppies, and the water that ran by our side looked clear and happy, and I sighed because it was all so wonderful after so long in trouble.

Again, in working out my journey with the aid of a map, I realise that we must have spent a night amongst the Greek villages of the Pontus, but that memory has gone. I remember speaking to a young Greek boy while we halted near a "khan," but I do not remember clearly whether we spent the night there or further on.

Trees were more plentiful in this part of the country, and fruits of all kinds were on sale in the villages, which were many and built in modern Greek style around their little churches. We slept there, amidst these Greeks, and proceeded to our destination.

Down a road flanked by mimosa trees which cast their shade on us; round bends where shadows of corn-stacks would etch the white roadway.

Then into a little valley by a river rushing seawards, past a battery of twenty-year-old guns resting untended, round another bend, and then all the joy the ancient Greeks felt, when they saw the same as I, surged within me and I too said: "Thalassa, Thalassa"—blue, calm, shimmering in the heat with Trebizond on the left.

I am aware that place-names may be wrong in the account of our journey coastwards; time may be confused; the described country may not come in the sequence I have said, but I have tried to remember and have put in the things that struck me at the time and compared them with a map, so that I do not think I have wandered far away from the things that matter.

Anyway nothing has been put in that did not occur; though much has been forgotten that did.

Well, Trebizond lay before us, and also the end of our journey, which had been memorable and will always be so to me. Some day I would wish to take the same road on horseback and refresh my mind with the beauties I saw in Turkey, ending up with this same view of the sea, which in summer is not Black, in spite of its name.

The town appeared to be pure Greek, and little villas on the surrounding slopes were similar to those of Mytilene, white with red roofs.

At the entrance to the town, soldiers asked our business and we were then let through. Our weird

conveyance excited no surprise as we drove into the main square and turned towards the quay, where, before a large house, we halted.

The sergeant-major led the way into the house and soon we stood before Sefi Bey, commander of the 13th Turkish Division. He told us we were to leave by the next Lloyd-Triestino boat for Constantinople, told us he would send an officer to look after us, hoped we would enjoy our time in Trebizond, and asked if there was anything we wanted.

I replied I had not washed with soap since March, when I was in Kars.

He suggested I should have my hair cut. I thanked him but explained I had no money.

Sefi Bey was condescension itself.

The National Government of Angora would pay for that. Cigarettes and coffee, bows and salutes, and then we left.

The sergeant-major conducted us to a hotel, and we were shown into a charming sitting-room with two bedrooms leading off it and European beds.

Here we stayed for half an hour and then a man came to cut our hair and trim my beard.

I remember how cold my neck felt after my hair had been cut off. Immediately we were shorn, the sergeant-major returned and told us to follow him.

Back we went towards Sefi Bey's office, and were led into an adjoining building and into a room with two beds overlooking the sea.

I was told that we were to stay here instead of in the hotel, and that this room had been occupied by

Colonel Rawlinson during his unhappy stay in Trebizond.

The room was barely furnished and reminded one of rooms in the officers' quarters of an English barracks.

The sergeant-major then took us to the baths.

In the tree-covered square were many Turkish and Russian officers. The latter, I learnt, were Russian "whites," who were chiefly artillery specialists in the Kemalist army. There were many Greeks and a few Italians in the town.

Nobody seemed surprised at our appearance.

Outside the baths we were introduced to the officer who was to look after us, a young midshipman in the non-existent Turkish navy, who spoke perfect English.

At the door we said good-bye to our sergeant-major and entered the baths.

There were many people there and we took our time, spending ten minutes at least in a last round-up of irritating parasites that lived in the seams of our clothes.

In the tiled bathing-room sat several aged and naked Turks who slowly emptied their brass basin over themselves, praising God audibly after each douche.

I have been in several Turkish baths in Constantinople and Anatolia, but have never seen the kind that we have in England, the massaging and greatly heated baths; though I suppose they do exist in the Near East.

When we had finished and dressed ourselves once



more in our old clothes, we felt much fitter and followed our midshipman into the square.

Outside a chemist's shop I saw a large American motor, and sitting at the wheel, my old friend Charlie Peers.

I rushed up to him and plied him with questions.

Had he seen me in Erzeroum? He had, but was afraid to show it.

Where were his wife, baby and sister-in-law? All in Trebizond, whither he had brought them after leaving Erivan, in a horse-drawn ox-cart by the south-west corner as the Bolshevik cavalry came in by the north-west. He had had a terrible race for safety. He had passed off his sister-in-law as an American, and was leaving shortly for Constantinople. Dr. Ussher<sup>1</sup> had stayed in Erivan. Our midshipman, coming up to us, would not let me continue my questions and we parted.

At that time the N.E.R. in Trebizond were distrusted by the Turks, since they believed certain Americans were smuggling arms into the Pontus in order to protect the Greeks.

Whether this was true or not I do not know, but it is doubtful, since there was no organised opposition later on when the Pontic Greeks were deported.

That evening the midshipman gave us a most excellent dinner in a Greek restaurant: my first really good meal since Erivan. Mahoney and I slept well that night, though I spent some time wondering how far I could swim out should I see an Italian boat

<sup>1</sup> Although we both feared for Dr. Ussher's safety, he was not molested and returned to the U.S.A. some months later.

arrive and know that I was not to leave the country but be returned to Erzeroum.

The next morning I saw a French boat in the bay and eagerly asked our sailor whether this was our boat of liberty. His negative answer, for some stupid reason, made me despondent and miserable for the whole morning.

The day was spent in visiting the town. We went up to the Greek cemetery that overlooked the town, a beautiful quiet spot, shaded by cypress trees.

We walked over the old town walls that showed in their ruins through a tangle of rambler roses and bougainvillæa. We wandered through the bazaar and the Turkish quarter, and I managed to change my hidden five-pound note into Turkish money.

Three more nights we spent in Trebizond, and on the morning of the 29th of June we were summoned once more before Sefi Bey. He handed me a paper of liberation written in Turkish and French, and told us that we should sail on the Lloyd-Triestino *Avantino*, which would shortly arrive and leave in the afternoon.

It all seemed too good to be true, but I was quite prepared for a set-back and wondered whether I could stand that long, beautiful journey back to Erzeroum.

We walked round the town and went once more to the cemetery. From there I saw the *Avantino* arrive, and I hurried the midshipman back so that I could board her at once.

At the quay the midshipman told us we could not go aboard till the afternoon; and again my heart sank. I ate nothing for lunch and hardly spoke a word. At

about three o'clock we returned to the quay, the midshipman went into the office and returned with the glad news that we could embark.

I was first into the little boat, and even then we did not start, for my liberation pass had to be stamped and a long conversation took place between the landing officer and the midshipman. At last we pushed off, and the boat seemed to drag as we neared the *Avantino*.

I counted the strokes of the oars from five hundred downwards and then there was still some distance to go. I was not free yet, but I determined to drown now rather than go back.

As I put my foot on the ship's ladder and looked back at the landing-stage I saw an officer hastily waving to a boat that had just set off with some Turkish peasants. The boat returned to pick him up.

"Here," I thought, "is the officer come to order my return." Mahoney and I mingled with the passengers whilst the midshipman spoke to the purser.

I listened for the other boat and at length it came aside. An officer ran up the ladder and came straight to me. He handed me a small packet and bowed, saying: "I have been sent from Angora to Erzeroum, where I missed you and have just arrived at Trebizond. These belong to you and are sent by the National Government of Turkey." I thanked him and he left. I opened the package and there were the two photographs of the Bolshevik massacre in Erivan that had been taken from me in Kars prison.

The ship's siren blew. The midshipman said good-bye, the ladder was raised and slowly the *Avantino* moved away. I stood where I was for some time, then sought my cabin and thanked God for my escape.

Some time later I went into the smoking-room, where I met the same ship's doctor who had sailed with me on the *Abaxzia* from Alexandria, also several of the stewards whom I knew well.

Seated in a corner were Peers and his wife. This was indeed great luck and we talked incessantly. We made good inroads into the ship's supply of beer and in the evenings sang many a song together that we had known in old army days. There were no other passengers except steerage ones, as far as I can remember, or perhaps it was because we were so happy to be free that we did not notice them. We stopped at Kerasund, Ordu and Samsun, where we both bathed from the ship, though it was all I could do, in my weakened condition, to haul myself from the sea. The weather during those four or five days was wonderful and the entry into the Bosphorus unimaginably beautiful.

Further on the old walls of Constantinople came in sight, and on the left bank the villas gleamed and reflected themselves proudly in the wonderful blue water.

At Samsun, if I remember rightly, we had picked up some more passengers, and on arrival at Galata<sup>1</sup> we had a fairly long interview with the British Military Intelligence. Once on land at Galata I felt really

<sup>1</sup> The lower part of Constantinople, where the docks lie.

free, and I chartered a cab to take me to the little Greek hotel I had stayed in before.

With what money I had left I bought a pair of pants and vest which filled me with joy, and then I set off for the "Jardin des Petits Champs" to see whom I could see. One of the first people I met was Chachatouni, late Town Commandant of Erivan, and we exchanged experiences. He was apparently almost destitute and was longing to get back to the stage and his beloved cinema, which he had not done since 1914; but he found that he had been forgotten and that few people in Europe knew the great Russian cinema artists, and therefore he was in despair.

I managed to borrow some money from the British headquarters, whilst I sent to England for enough to bring me home, and with this I feasted my old friend of Erivan days.

It was some time before my money came, and about ten days after my arrival I took the Orient Express for Paris and shook off the dust of the past.

I was provided with a temporary British passport which was to cause trouble shortly, for on arrival at the Serbian frontier I was arrested as a Bolshevik and detained. The more I told them, in very bad Russian, that I was not a Slav, since I could not speak the language well, the more they told me I was only putting it on. Finally they let me continue as far as Belgrade with an armed guard in my compartment. That night I did not sleep, for the guard would not let the light be turned out.

Amongst my travelling companions was Olga Moussine-Poushchine, the Russian authoress, who

was so convinced I was a certain Russian Grand Duke that she would not bear witness for me that I was English, although she spoke English as well as I do and should have known.

However, at Belgrade I managed to satisfy the authorities and I was allowed to proceed in peace.

I arrived safely in Paris and left direct for England, where I found great heat in London.

I forget the date, but it was in the evening of the opening of King Edward's statue that stands at the head of the Duke of York's steps.

There is no more to tell.

Shura was finally released, owing to the good offices of Nourri Pasha, brother of the great Enver, who took a liking to him; and arrived in Constantinople some eight months later from Trebizond. He now lives in Brussels.

His mother, stepfather, aunt and grandmother had previously managed to escape.

Arakelian escaped from Russia by disguising himself as a peasant and hiding in an Italian boat till it left.

Chalgadzian is somewhere in the Balkans.

Joseph Markossian was in prison in Moscow when I last heard of him.

Charles Peers went to Bucharest, and I have heard nothing since.

Dr. Ussher is in America.

Kemal was eventually released and lives near Angora, but has forsaken poultry and bees for tailoring.

Thus we are all scattered, but a memory must remain in all our minds of what we have seen.



Sometimes the memory is happy, but more often not; for there were hard days and sad.

Armenia is still under Bolshevik domination, so is Georgia. Both are suffering.

I have tried to tell what I remember. I have exaggerated nothing. If the sorrows of the Trans-Caucasian people stir a feeling of pity in the heart of a reader, may he or she remember them in their prayers. They are great peoples, but we are luckier than they. Maybe we shall not always be. . . .

## CHAPTER XII

As a conclusion I have thought it well to show in black and white the promises of the great Allies in order that those who may be interested can see why Armenia continued her vain struggle for independence in the belief that she would be supported.

On the 28th of January, 1923, at the Peace Conference in Paris, the Armenian Delegation received the following letter from the Secretariat-General :

The Secretariat-General of the Peace Conference has the honour to inform the President of the Delegation from the Armenian Republic that in the sitting of the 19th of January, 1920, the heads of the Governments of France, Great Britain and Italy adopted the following resolution :—

It is decided :

- 1st. That the Government of the Armenian State shall be recognised as a Government *de fait* ;
- 2nd. That this recognition will not affect the question of the eventual frontiers of this State.

Seven months later this same Government was recognised as a Government *de jure* and attended officially to sign the Treaty of Sèvres on the 10th of August, 1920. The following are the clauses that chiefly concern Armenia :

Article 88.—Turkey declares to recognise, as the Allied Powers have already done, Armenia as a free and independent State.

Article 89.—Turkey and Armenia, as also the other high contracting parties, agree to submit to the arbitration of the President of the United States of America the settling of the frontier between Turkey and Armenia in the villayets of Erzeroum, Trebizond, Van and Bitlis, and to accept his decision, as also all dispositions that he might make relative to Armenia's access to the sea and relative to the demilitarisation of all Turkish territory adjoining the said frontier.

Article 90.—In the case of the fixing of the frontier, in virtue of Article 89, implying the transfer of all or part of the territory of the said villayets, Turkey declares from henceforward to renounce, dating from the decision, all rights and titles over the transferred territory.

The dispositions of the present treaty, applicable to the territories detached from Turkey, will be, henceforward, applicable to this territory.

Let me quote, with reference to Armenia's rights, from a speech of Mr. Lloyd George's :

Arabia, Armenia, Mesopotamia, Syria and Palestine, from our point of view, have the right to see their national separate existence recognised. We will not discuss here the exact form which the recognition of this existence might take in each particular case. Suffice it to say that it would be impossible to give back these countries to their ancient masters.

And of the five countries named only Armenia was let down. . . . Of course other things, besides mere *laisser-faire*, caused the downfall of Trans-Caucasia's independence; but the greatest was lack of foresight and knowledge displayed by Mr. Lloyd George's Foreign Secretary.

Another part of the blame must be laid on the British Labour Party, who consistently urged the withdrawal of the British troops from Georgia at a time when their presence would have saved both Georgia and Armenia.

This again must have been due to ignorance of the position and the attention paid by the Labour Party to certain of Mr. Jourdanias's <sup>1</sup> followers, who looked at that time on the presence of British troops as a menace to their sovereignty.

Nevertheless, one would imagine that Mr. Lloyd George's Foreign Secretary knew the inevitable result, and one is surprised that he did not resign rather than be a party to the surrendering of free countries to a foreign yoke.

The advent of Bolshevism in Armenia and Georgia, which I have described earlier on, was the end of all hope for the men who had spent their lives in the cause of their country's independence.

Bolshevism, as I saw it, struck me as being far more of a psychological disease than a form of society. Its propagandists were too often men of neurotic mentality and unpractical nonchalance.

In its modern form it is a reaction; a form of perverted Tsardom, of anti-religious mania arising from persecution, too much religion, war strain and general racial degeneracy; and all this, planted on a people whose past reputation for corruption, lying, immorality, disease and ignorance was unsurpassed, has produced the regime we call Bolshevik.

"Extremes meet" is very true if we look at this

<sup>1</sup> President of the Georgian Republic.

regime from a psychological view-point; for the madness of genius, the pugnacity of pacifists, the atheistic creation of Marx as a God, the hailing of Lenin as the new Tsar by rabid republicans, were all to be found amongst Bolshevik leaders.

The half-hearted attitude of the Russian aristocracy compared very unfavourably with that of the French during their revolution and has alienated the sympathy of the peasants. In this may be found one of the causes for the stability of the Soviet Government, for there is no doubt that if the Russian aristocracy had stood their ground or even sided with Kerensky when the Bolsheviks first showed their faces, a stable Menshevik Government would have been the result.

But in their opposition to Kerensky lay their help for Lenin. The whole history of the Kerensky *débâcle*, the petty jealousies, the death of Kornilov, the opposition from the nobility, the further sequence of events and the repeated victories of the Red armies from 1918 to 1921, are all heavily marked by the finger of a strange but very consistent Fate.

How Kerensky's jealousy of Kornilov's growing power turned against his own leadership; how Kornilov fell when on the eve of victory; how Lenin escaped death time after time; how Koltchak was betrayed and Denikin gave up; how Wrangel so nearly was victorious, and how Great Britain let Bolshevism into Trans-Caucasia.

It reads amazingly. Step by step, without any apparent effort, the Powers played into Lenin's hands.

And to think that if the advice and entreaty of

Czecho-Slovakia had been listened to, the whole tragedy would have been averted ! . . .

In the face of all this it is still the policy of Great Britain to set men at the heads of Foreign Office departments who have never been in the country they are set to watch and who are ignorant of the people and language.

It is not surprising that Bolshevism is spreading. It will not surprise me if it spreads in England, for it is a doctrine of hopelessness and desire for anything or nothing rather than the present.

It is because people cannot wait that revolution starts. They could not wait in Russia, and Kerensky's revolution followed. They could not wait for Kerensky's promised reforms, and Bolshevism followed. And this in a country where the majority is exceedingly slow to move.

The Imperialism of Soviet Russia has never been realised amongst Socialists in this country; but by the actions of Russia in Finland, Esthonia and Latvia, her aggressive policy towards Poland and Roumania and her invasion of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia, it is clear to those who have spoken with leading Bolsheviki that her policy has not changed in spite of her outbursts against British Imperialism.

She still covets Poland, the Baltic States, Bessarabia and the old Kars frontier, and no one knows better than Mustapha Kemal Pasha that Constantinople is still her Naboth's vineyard.

Russia is so absorbed with her foreign desires that home affairs take a very secondary place.

It recalls the revolution tale of a Kommissar from



the country arriving in Moscow with the news that his villagers were starving.

*Soviet.* Starving? Well, enlist them in the army.

*Kommissar.* But those that are too old?

*Soviet.* Arrest them as counter-revolutionaries, you fool, and have them shot.

And certainly it is an excellent cure for starvation. . . . I do not think one can stress sufficiently the importance of Russia's imperialistic policy which culminated in the taking of Georgia in 1921.

This act completed a chain which leaves, as regards Great Britain, an uninterrupted line of enemies from Macedonia to Afghanistan, who will be able, when necessity arises, to cut all land communication with India by a simple advance south.

Mr. J. de Morgan in his preface to Mr. Basmadjian's *Histoire Moderne des Arméniens*, sounds a warning note when, in reference to Armenia's betrayal by the Allies, he writes: "L'Europe, ce n'est pas seulement montrée égoïste, inhumaine; elle a manqué de prudence."

The truth of this is in the lap of the future, but it all becomes a far greater tragedy when we realise that the desertion of Armenia and Georgia would not have taken place if the Mosul oil wells had been situated at Karaklis.

Akin to Bolshevism, as far as a dictatorship is concerned, we find another creed that has risen powerfully in the Near East.

This is Nationalism.

It arose in Georgia and Armenia with the Peace

Treaty and is a most magnificent creed to draw a nation together; but, later, intolerance sets in, and in those two countries this resulted in arrogance towards strangers and even fellow-countrymen of "minority" opinion, and the tactless, alienating treatment of the Erivan Tartar population by the Armenians.

It brings division in its later and uncontrolled stages as quickly as it brings unity in its first days of life.

Azerbaijan never had even the earlier stages of nationalism. She was too uncultured a country to understand its elementary points. Consequently she fell an easy prey to invading Russian troops.

Nationalism is not preached in Russia, for her control is by Jews, who, as a race, have suffered because the nationalism they decry is written by Nature in their faces.

On the other hand, Russia has unintentionally created a nationalism of her own which she calls by another name, and desires to plant on the unwilling heads of all nations.

This she strangely calls "Internationalism," which contradicts its name when one realises that it means the subjugation of foreign peoples to a Russian "nationalism." Strange paradox indeed.

With Turkey, her nationalism is not that of a nation, but of a class; the class of pashas, beys and mullahs—the class of rulers. The bulk of the people who are peasants just do what they are told: are forced periodically into the army and are incapable of understanding what it is all about.

It is essentially a military nationalism and was the

outcome of the weakness of the conquering nation in dealing with a people with a guilty conscience.

Turkey acted as a man would who is being taken to prison by guards who pay no attention to him—he escapes and bands himself with others against the forces of law and order.

Luckily for him, the guards gave up and returned home and told the newspapers how brave their prisoner was and how polite. The fact of his having murdered thousands of Christians did not matter—there was no oil in Armenia.

Turkey's troubles are to come. She has ceased fighting and the divisions in her ranks are sleeping with the dawn. She is watchful of Russia, of course, and Kazim Kara Bekir Pasha is a great power still and knows how to keep his eastern frontier in good order.

A spark or two near Kars would cause a great deal of damage and might bring Russia to Trebizond.

A spark in Bessarabia might coincide, and then justice might be done, only the British people will probably be asked to protect poor Turkey because Russians north of Mosul would be disconcerting to the oil-fields.

So far nationalism has not raised its head in Mesopotamia or Syria, and consequently unity is not sufficiently apparent to cause apprehension.

Hungary developed it after Bela Kuhn's escapade and it has served her people well.

Poland has it in varying degrees, but chiefly when in danger, and then the creed is generally easier to handle.

English nationalism does not exist, though Scotland has the germs which may or may not lead to an illness.

Italy again, like Turkey, has her troubles to come; her nationalism is getting out of control, and it is then the trouble starts.

In the case of Russia and Turkey there is another complex. Both peoples are Oriental.

Some Englishmen do not understand what this means. It is difficult to explain. . . .

Orientalism in politics means a complete disregard for truth, a religiously conceived desire for appropriation, a shrugged shoulder towards murder or death, an aristocratic air of despal towards Europeans and a great love of money.

It means other things as well, but those chiefly.

Nevertheless the Slav is very unlike the Turk. The Turk is quicker, more far-seeing, less corrupt, more energetic, always full of hope, more cunning, more polite (which hides a multitude of sins), more opportunist, and more cruel.

The Slav is slow, unintelligent, sentimental, imaginative in reply (this is Russian for "lying"), corrupt, superstitious, fatalistic, "spineless" and stubborn.

In dealing with both these peoples it is not sufficient to either treat them with contempt or to slap them on the back and treat them as similar beings. They hate the one and cannot understand the other.

In that most interesting book of Mr. E. B. Lanin entitled *Russian Characteristics*, he tells how the ordinary everyday proverbs of the Russian peasantry

show their opinions of honesty and veracity. Some of these are: "Wherein one deals, therein one steals"; "Why not steal, so long as there's no one to hinder it"? "Rye beautifies the field, and a lie beautifies speech"; "A palatable lie is better than a bitter truth"; "Truth is not fit to be put into action: it should be put in an ikon glass-case and prayed to."

Others which show different ideas are: "The slower you drive the further you go"; "To live is more terrible than to die"; "If you mourn, God will lengthen your life"; "To live is to groan by night in dreams, by day from real suffering."

Deceit is a natural trait of character and is very successfully used in commerce.

Coffee sold in Russia, before the war, when analysed was shown to consist of clay and chicory, without a trace of coffee. Tea, on analysis, showed very little tea, mixed with boiled tea-leaves and willow-herb, coloured with burnt sugar.

But this was before the war, and what it is made of now would probably baffle the analysts of Europe.

I should like to quote, finally, from Mr. Lanin's book, a passage written by a Russian: <sup>1</sup>

I have often conversed on the subject of theft with men who are absolutely honest; but even they never once expressed that repugnance to lying which characterises the way of thinking of civilised people. An especially calm tone, varied by smiles and laughter at the description of thievish conduct and at what

<sup>1</sup> *Russian Characteristics*, by E. B. Lanin (Chapman and Hall), p. 207.

و حله

[illegible]

اوله ارضی فرقہ خواندنی  
برائی

Tréiz Zuzade

Le 29/ 6 /1921 .

Monsieur Boldvin, Lieutenant de réserve, sujet anglais, qui se trouve en qualité de prisonnier dans le front d'Orient, est, par la permission de la Grande Assemblée Nationale de Turquie, mis en liberté dans le port de Trébizonde pour partir à son pays.

Il partira, par sa volonté, sur le bateau Avantino de l'Isola  
Triestina, à Stamboul, qui quittera ledit port à 29/6 /1921.

Les autorités compétentes anglaises feront parvenir le gouvernement de la Grande Assemblée Nationale de Turquie à ANKARA, à son arrivée à Stamboul.

Commandant de 13eme division

colonel

Судя

ORDER OF RELEASE IN TURKISH AND FRENCH  
(Notice the spelling of the town we call Angora.)

[To face p. 264.]





they consider the ludicrous position of the victims of the theft, and a rapturous raising of the voice when detailing the deftness of the robber—that is all that I have observed during such conversations.

If only people in authority in England had understood the national characteristics of the people with whom they conduct foreign relations, a great deal of the tragedy of post-war misery would have been averted; but as long as English politicians continue to look on politics as a pastime second to their control of collieries, furnaces or cotton factories, so long shall we be led into unsatisfactory foreign predicaments, betrayals and offences.

There is another danger which one can do well to realise, although, so long as Bolshevism holds sway, its outlet is blocked. This is the Pan-Touranianism which is in the heart of so many of the ruling Turks.

It is a desire to link up the Mohammedan countries which contain people of the same origin as the Turks themselves. These countries from west to east are Turkey, the Batoum province, Azerbaijan, Dagestan, Astrachan, both Turkestans, and Bokhara. East again they would wish a union with Afghanistan and the Mohammedans of India and even Malay.

To the west of Macedonia they wish once more to control Albania. This is an ambitious policy, and if it proceeded would probably constitute a grave menace to Europe, but its first setback came with the taking of Armenia by Russia.

The religious reforms in Turkey, although they will tend to elevate the race, cannot be said to have encouraged other Mohammedan countries to look on

Turkey with greater respect. The true Pan-Touranianists also covet parts of Persia, the Volga and the Crimea as well, but unless Turkey is very careful in her policy she will undoubtedly show the way for Russia to increase her Asiatic control.

When a large country like Russia is collapsing economically, there is but one way to stave off a revolution, and that is to translate the cry of her oppressed people into one of imagined foreign oppression and set forth to gain new land.

She has tentacles in China and tentacles in Persia, but in the latter country she will interfere with Turkey.

Turkey is never afraid to fight—it is her finest quality. As I said before, Turkey is watching Russia, and Russia is waiting for another short-sighted man in the British Foreign Office.

British foreign policy gave her Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia, and may give her more.

Commandant A. Poidebard, M.C.,<sup>1</sup> in *Au carrefour des routes de Perse*, from which I have quoted before, speaks of Pan-Touranianism as follows :

In the autumn of 1921 the Pan-Touranian movement, having become the active centre of Pan-Islamism, stands out against the West, and especially against England, in a disquietening alliance with Bolshevik Russia.

In the background, Imperialist Germany watches, with satisfaction, her two Oriental pupils, whom she continues to follow with an attentive solicitude.

The revolts in Egypt and India, the increasing

<sup>1</sup> p. 307

strength of the Kemalists, are the real warnings of the powerful and organised action of this new triple alliance who desire the revision of the treaties of Versailles and of Sèvres.

Bien fous sont ceux qui nient le danger.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless one cannot be certain that this increased power of Turkey will be permanent.

She is in process of reorganisation, full of pride, unbeaten and confident of the folly and weakness of our policy towards her.

For this the Treaty of Lausanne is to blame.

Turkey was the great gainer from the 1914-1918 war. She was never beaten by us. We never penetrated her strongholds. She kept her arms. She lost none of her leaders save Enver, who might have been troublesome to her if he could not have his own way. She beat Armenia in 1920 and retook Kars. She beat Greece in 1921 and was unharmed by either war.

She arrived at Lausanne before Lord Curzon full of insolence and pride, and came away with Constantinople, Macedonia and a heightened prestige.

An amazing performance when one thinks of the Dardanelles and Mesopotamian campaigns of 1915 and 1918.

A vain and useless sacrifice negated by English politicians for an entirely unknown and unexplained reason.

Lord Curzon was British Foreign Secretary shortly after the war; was in power during the Turkish-

<sup>1</sup> I have not translated this, because it sounds so much better in French.

Armenian war, during the Turco-Greek war, during the massacres of Armenian and Greek civilians, and during the Lausanne Treaty which was signed by Great Britain.

During the time the Conference was sitting, deportations of Armenians were taking place from Van, Bitlis, and Cilicia into Syria. Telegrams reached the Armenian delegation daily on the sufferings of these poor unfortunate people, but when the head of the delegation asked to interview Lord Curzon, the latter refused to see him or any other representative of this martyred people.

In the sub-commission, presided over by Sir Horace Rumbold, the second British representative, the question of an Armenian home in Turkey was raised.<sup>1</sup> As soon as the question was put, Ismet Pasha, the head of the Turkish delegation, rose and left the room, with the result that Armenia, her rights, her existence or her people were never mentioned again. Still the deportations and massacre continued.

It was an amazing business. . . .

In 1920 the words of Lord Curzon had been circulated all over Armenia—"I created Armenia's independence and will always stand by her."

In 1922-23 Lord Curzon refused to see an Armenian representative and left the people to their fate.

One is not surprised that the "word of England" has lost its significance, and that Great Britain has descended from her place amongst the Powers that can be believed in.

<sup>1</sup> This was a suggestion that a part of Armenia held by Turkey should be set aside for the Armenian people.

The tragedy of the Treaty of Lausanne has not been finished. It has left a state of affairs which cannot smoulder for ever. The betrayal of Armenia will come back and hit Great Britain when she least expects it.

This martyred people who had believed in Great Britain are not alone. Azerbaijan and Georgia believed as well. The Assyro-Chaldeans from northern Mesopotamia have been forced to lose their faith, and are a greater power than we are apt to think in that important corner of the world.

The Greeks have weird memories of promises, disaster and desertion dating from the Parga<sup>1</sup> incident in 1817.

What effect this will have on India and Egypt remains to be seen; but the respect is fading fast, and Great Britain will then know the foreign policy that led to it; step by step and year by year, and all heavily cloaked so that not even newspapers could understand what was happening.

The foreign policy of a country like ours should never be in the hands of one man. There should be a special committee of experts chosen for their knowledge of peoples and languages. The departments of the Foreign Office should be under chiefs who know the country and people they are dealing with, and no first, second or third secretary should be kept in Downing Street longer than three years; so that there can come fresh minds with the latest political

<sup>1</sup> In 1814 the town of Parga (Greek town in Epirus) placed itself under British protection to escape subjugation by Ali Pasha. In 1817 Great Britain handed over Parga to Ali as a reward for his services against France.



information to take over the work of each separate department, and no more need we have men dealing with present-day Ruritanian policy by remarking periodically: "Ah, yes, I know all about it, I was in Zenda in '87."

I have mentioned Assyro-Chaldea.

They, like the Armenians, are an isolated Christian race who fought with us, instead of with Turkey, during the 1914-1918 war. They fought because Russia and Great Britain promised them independence. They would have been better off had they sided with Turkey. They fought magnificently, but nothing is done to redeem that promise made. Many of their tribes are fed periodically, when they are starving, by the English authorities in Mesopotamia; but they live in terror. When Mesopotamia is evacuated they will be massacred by the Turks for the part they played in the war. They know this, so does Great Britain, but the reason why they have not got their independence and are not allowed to found their own State is interesting. Their people happen to lie just north of the oil-fields of Mosul and have been formed into Assyrian battalions under British officers, acting as a protective force between Turkey and these valuable oil-fields. If they were in their own State, they might not care to preserve oil-fields for English capitalists. This is the only obvious excuse one can make, unless one wishes to say that Great Britain deliberately broke another promise.

And one does not want to say that. . . .

The position to-day throughout the whole of the Near East is fraught with danger.

It seems as if the smouldering fire is receiving charcoal instead of wood.

The Near East is the future volcano. Everything done since the war was directed, apparently, to making it so.

A sane foreign and colonial policy may save it for some years to come, but there are many incompatible forces very close together who are not fond of each other.

With this I close the story of my wanderings in those particular corners of the globe.

I was unlucky, for I witnessed a great tragedy, and miserable because I knew it could have been averted by my own country.

England is not fond of foreign policy and was not sufficiently interested to keep her Governments "up to the scratch" in this direction.

However, if this book can make readers picture the position of people less fortunate than themselves, I shall have done my task to my own liking, and with that be content.

One day independence may come again to Trans-Caucasia, but it will not be before much blood has been shed. Great joys and rewards only come from sacrifice, and the last one does not appear to have been sufficient. . . .





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